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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the experiences of nine Samoan college students attending institutions of higher education in Los Angeles (California) County. In-depth interviews were conducted to find students' perspectives on: (1) barriers to higher education for Samoan students; (2) the means by which these students have dealt with or overcome these barriers; and (3) their recommendations for improving the educational access and retention of Samoan and other Pacific American students. First, an introductory chapter presents a literature review and explains the study's methodology and significance. Chapter 2 discusses social contexts for Samoan students, including Samoan history, the sociodemographic context of U.S. Samoan communities, issues within Samoan communities in the United States, educational issues facing Samoan youth, and the marginalization and minimal representation of Samoans in higher education. Chapter 3 presents narrative excerpts from the student interviews organized into three categories: obstacles to higher education, overcoming barriers, and solutions/recommendations. Recommendations are further organized into 10 topics, which include the need to recruit Samoan/Pacific Islander faculty and staff; teacher training in Samoan/Pacific Islander culture; and special assistance to Samoan student athletes. Seven appendices include definitions of Samoan terms, consent forms, the interview instrument, maps, and enrollment data. (Contains 86 references.) (DB)

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Higher Educational Perspectives: Through the Narratives of Samoan College Students

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Asian American Studies

By

Thomas Sakai Tsutsumoto

1998

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The thesis of Thomas Sakai Tsutsumoto is approved.

Don T. Nakanishi

Daniel G. Solorzano

David T. Takeuchi, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

1998

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction 1

Literature Review 3

Methodology 7

Significance of the Study 12

CHAPTER TWO: Social Contexts from the Past to the Present 16

A Brief Historical Discussion 16

The Sociodemographic Context of US Samoan Communities 24

Issues of Concern Within Samoan Communities in the United States 27

Educational Issues Facing Samoan Youth 31

Samoans in College: Marginalization and Minimal Representation 33

CHAPTER THREE: Student Narratives 44

Obstacles to Higher Education 45

Overcoming Barriers 55

Solutions/Recommendations 63

CHAPTER FOUR: Discussion/Recommendations 78

APPENDICES:

A. Terminology 85

B. Consent Form 88

C. Advertisement/Invitation 92

D. Purpose of the Study 93

E. Interview Instrument 94

F. Maps 99

G. 1996 Fall Ethnic Enrollment Data_____114

REFERENCES_____115

LIST OF FIGURES

Tables

Educational Attainment for 18 - 24 Year Old Cohort ____ 25 - 26

Occupational Characteristics in Los Angeles County for Persons 16 Years or Older ____ 26

1996 Enrollment Figures for Pacific Islander Students ____ 39

1996 Fall Ethnic Enrollment Data ____ 114

Maps

Samoan Archipelago (Adopted from Meleisea, 1987) ____ 99

Migration Patterns From Samoa ____ 100

US West ____ 101

California Counties ____ 102

Los Angeles County ____ 103

San Francisco County ____ 104

San Mateo County (North) ____ 105

San Diego County (West) ____ 106

Hawai'i County ____ 107

Honolulu County ____ 108

Hawai'i Counties ____ 109

Maui County Enlarged ____ 110

Washington Counties ____ 111

Seattle - King County ____ 112

Tacoma - Pierce County ____ 113

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Higher Educational Perspectives: Through the Narratives of Samoan College Students

by

Thomas Sakai Tsutsumoto

Master of Arts in Asian American Studies

University of California, Los Angeles, 1998

David T. Takeuchi, Committee Chair

Samoans constitute a large proportion of the Pacific Americans in the United States. Unfortunately, Samoan students experience a pervasive trend of school problems -- high incidents of expulsion, gang involvement, and a struggle to achieve a greater voice and empowerment as very minimally represented students in higher education. In California, for example, the representation of "Pacific Islander" students in undergraduate student bodies in community colleges, California State Universities, and the University of California system generally fluctuates between 0.3 - 0.5%. This study will explore and describe the experience of the few Pacific American students who have overcome, and continue to face tremendous odds in terms of their representation in higher education: Samoan college students.

Based on the transcripts of in-depth interviews with nine Samoan college students of Los Angeles County institutions of higher education, this study will uncover their perspectives on: 1) barriers to higher education for Samoan students, 2) the means by which these students have dealt with or overcame these barriers, and 3) finally, the kinds

of recommendations, or ideas they have towards improving the educational access and retention of Samoan, and perhaps other Pacific American students.

With very little assistance, these students continue to face and overcome very challenging economic and social hardships through college. Massive outreach, active mentorships, and expanded long-term tutorials constitute the crux of their suggestions to improve the recruitment and retention of more Samoan, and for that matter, Pacific American students.

CHAPTER ONE:

Introduction

Overview

Of Pacific Americans[1], many Samoans in the United States face the adversity of living within socioeconomically challenging contexts. Hawaiians and Samoans comprise the largest population amongst Pacific Americans. Much to the contrary of the model minority[2] image of success associated with the Asian Pacific American spectrum, a high of about one in four Samoan families in the U.S. was below the poverty level in 1989 (Pouesi, 1994). In academia, the school problems Samoan students face are rampant and pervasive. Whether in Seattle, Honolulu, the San Francisco Bay area, Los Angeles, or San Diego Counties, or any city where Samoan communities proliferate, incidents of Samoan high school students facing expulsion, academic probation, or other academically "at-risk" situations, constitute part of the trend of school failure amongst Samoan youth.

In the area of higher education, Samoan students are generally very minimally if not under-represented. California for example, contains the highest percentage (50.7 %) of the Samoan population in the United States (Barringer et al, 1993). The median age for Pacific Islander Americans, most of whom are Hawaiian or Samoan is 21.5 years which indicates a large, college-aged cohort (Population Characteristics for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, 1990). However, only a fraction of the Pacific Americans who comprise a mere 0.2 percent (www.ucop.edu, 1997) of the student body within the University of California system, for example, are Samoan.

With rising costs of tuition, and recent successful efforts to dismantle affirmative action policies, most students of color[3] in particular face very unique challenges. Samoan and Pacific American students are no exception. Given that a college education is commonly regarded as a viable way to maximize one's ability to think critically, gain broader insights and experiences, as well as improve one's chances to better their

occupational and employment opportunities, the potential achievement of Samoan, and for that matter, Pacific Islander youth is not realized. There is very minimal if any effort at all on behalf of any educational system to provide information, and other services to prepare them for an education beyond high school. Samoan students who go to college must overcome a multitude of obstacles.

Research Aims and Objectives

The aim of this study is both exploratory, and descriptive as it analyzes the experiences of the those who have beaten the odds to become the exceptions -- Samoan students in college. This study seeks to determine the factors which count as barriers to enrollment for Samoan students to college, the means by which Samoan students have overcome barriers to higher education, and finally their perceptions, and constructions of the means by which Samoan students would be able to gain more access to and representation in college.

This study will address the following general questions:

1)What do Samoan college students perceive as factors which pose challenges to their access to college or higher education in general?

2)What kinds of strategies have Samoan college students utilized to overcome and/or cope with adversities in order to get in and stay in college?

3)What do Samoan students suggest can be done to provide greater access and opportunity for Samoan youth to higher education?

Chapter Organization

This thesis will consist of four main chapters. This first chapter provides a brief overview of the study--basically an introduction into the problem: marginalization and minimal representation of Samoan and other Pacific Islander students in higher education. The literature review will introduce selected works on Samoan history, culture, migration, and other issues as they relate to the Samoan educational experience. The methodology section will explain the research design of this study, and how both the qualitative, and

quantitative data were utilized. Chapter One will close with a brief summary of the significance of the Samoan educational experience to Asian American Studies, and minority education in a general sense.

The focus will then expand to an initial view of the socioeconomic context of Samoans living in the United States through a brief discussion on the history of migration, and proliferation of areas with high concentrations of Samoan populations in the second chapter. The discussion will then flow into the contemporary social context of Samoan communities, and the issues that many Samoan youth encounter while growing up in the States, attending high school and college later on.

Next, the lens of the discussions zooms in on the higher educational context of Samoan students through their narratives provided in the third chapter. Chapter Three captures the essence of the central aim of this study through their voices: an exposure of the experiences of Samoan college students along with other Pacific Islander students, whose low numbers in college push them into arenas of marginalization; their challenges, their perspectives on how they endure and overcome these challenges, and finally, their suggestions, recommendations, and other constructions of what they see as a means of empowering themselves to improve the educational future for other Samoan students. This chapter is based on the interviews with nine Samoan college students from various institutions of higher education in Los Angeles County, and for the most part, embodies the larger portion of this thesis. Finally, Chapter Four will close the study with a summary of the findings: the common themes, ideas, and recommendations which the discussions in Chapter Three have generated.

Literature Review

In preparation for this research project, an array of literature on the cultural histories, demographics, as well as issues and experiences confronting Samoan

communities in the United States were useful to this study. For this section, the literature will be outlined in the following manner:

(1) migration, cultural adaptation, and demographics,
(2) current issues of the Samoan communities in the United States, and
(3) the Samoan educational experience

Migration, Cultural Adaptation, and Demographics

There is, in addition to works centered on Samoan culture and history (Va'a, 1997, Meleisea, 1987a,b, Fiaui, 1985, Kiste et al., 1994) a useful amount of literature on the migration, formation, and socio-demographic make-up of the Samoan communities in the U.S., and how this community has adapted to life in a very different, Western society.

The colonial history of European and American occupation of Samoa created economic conditions which facilitated outmigrations of Samoans during the 1950s. Samoan communities began to proliferate in mainly New Zealand, Australia, and the United States. A fine work although centered on the experience of Western Samoan migrants is Paul Shankman's 1994 article, *The Samoan Exodus*. Shankman discusses not only the migration process itself, the reasons for migration, but also the racial images of Polynesians, and Samoans as they migrate.

Based on her observations, Lydia Kotcheck (1976) has argued in her study on adaptive strategies of Samoans in Seattle that Samoans there are less visible as minorities in mainland cities than in Honolulu. The former are overlooked for social service programs. She concludes that in response to their situation, Samoan communities adapt through: 1) the maintenance of **faaSamoa**, the Samoan way of life, 2) panSamoa, or collectively gathering and empowering each other within the Samoan community as a means of gaining recognition and resources, and 3) isolation, or maintaining a distant relation from the **faaSamoa** and becoming more individualistic. Her work on the adaptation of Samoan communities provides useful information on the existence or absence of structures available for Samoan communities in different major cities during the period before the 1980

Census. Although Samoans have become more "visible," there is still much room for more support networks for Samoans in Honolulu, Seattle, and California, that need to be available for utilization.

1990 Census files produced the quantitative data of this study. Robert Franco provides one of the most detailed statistical summaries on the Samoan communities in Hawai'i. In *Samoans in Hawai'i: A Demographic Profile* (1984), Franco provides a very detailed analysis of the dispersal of the Samoan population on O'ahu. He provides data based on the 1980 Census on income levels, occupational and educational attainment, and health care figures for Samoans living in Hawai'i. Similarly, Barringer, Gardner, and Levin's 1993 guide *Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States* provides demographic figures on Samoans and Pacific Islanders from the 1990 Census.

Issues Within Samoan Communities of the United States

High unemployment, inadequate physical and mental health-care, language/cultural barriers, high incidents of expulsion from school, and educational adjustment are a few of the issues that arise within the Samoan community. These issues bear significance on the educational experience of Samoan students as they reflect the socially challenging contexts which in turn may create barriers to their successful educational performance.

Ramsey Shu and Adele Satele (1977) have studied the condition and needs of the Samoan community in Carson, California. Their study suggests that the social service, medical, health, and elderly needs for the Samoan community are overlooked by social service planners, or inadequate. Although this article was written over two decades ago, the remnants of these conditions remain intact and a significant issue for the Samoan community well into the 1990s.

Patosina Luce and Alexander Mamak (1982) have concluded that there should be a separate Federally recognized category for Pacific Americans. The Census Bureau has recently adopted this category, but nation-wide, in terms of many school districts, the

recognition of Pacific American as a separate category, and the disaggregation of this cluster into its ethnic components, is evolving very slowly.

The Samoan Educational Experience

A few works relate directly to the educational experiences of Samoan youth (SEED, 1994, Bousseau, 1993, Luce, 1985). The *Sulufa'iga: Report of the University of Hawai'i Task Force on Samoans and Pacific Islanders* (1994) provides very detailed evidence of the underrepresentation of Samoans in the University of Hawai'i system.

This report provided recommendations on how the University of Hawai'i system could improve its means of accommodating the specific educational needs of Samoan, and other Polynesian students. Specifically, this report stressed the need for educational programs, and cultural organizations to disseminate information to students, and parents on financial aid, application procedures, for the development of student support services for Samoan/Pacific American students, for improved recruitment and retention programs in fields in which Samoan/Pacific American students are underrepresented, and for increased hiring of more Samoan/Pacific American or bilingual/biculturally proficient faculty and staff.

Another work directly related to this research is a resource guide (Bousseau, 1993) on Samoan culture within the American educational system. This guide provides a set of responsibilities, and frameworks mainly for educators who work with Samoan youth. The resource guide contains rules that pertain to Samoan culture, and culturally appropriate means of working with youth.

Patosina Luce (1985) has produced work on the educational needs of Samoan students. In this article she concludes that in relation to the issue of Samoans lumped in with Asian Americans, the educational needs of Samoan and Pacific Islander students in general are overlooked. The problems she cites of students are: 1) the isolation of American Samoan communities from schools which their children attend, 2) limited

faaSamoa and the school system, and 4) the lack of knowledge of Pacific Island culture among educators and teachers, and their inability to identify and address the needs of Samoan students.

Methodology

Qualitative Component

Both quantitative and qualitative designs were used to generate data for this thesis. For the most part, however, this research employed primarily a qualitative design that was exploratory and descriptive[4] in nature as an approach to understanding the experiences associated with the minimal representation of Samoan Students in institutions of higher learning. Specifically, the qualitative approach proceeded under the form of in-depth interviews with nine Samoan college students. For that matter, in selecting students for participation, I utilized a modest amount of ethnographic participant observation[5] with Pacific Islander student organizations within colleges and high schools.

The in-depth interviews were arranged with students from various colleges in the Los Angeles/South Bay/Carson area in accordance with the organization of the California higher educational system: California community colleges, California State Universities, and University of California systems. With the exception of background coding information (See appendix E), the questions in the interview guide were primarily open-ended(non yes/no--type) to follow a basic qualitative design. The interviews were intended to create a comfortable discussion session with Samoan students allowing them to open up about their experiences in the educational system. The questions were centered around the three previously mentioned areas of concern, but were intended additionally to create a wide range of ideas and discussion topics.

Although this study minimally utilized certain quantitative procedures, the qualitative research design was beneficial as the primary source of data for this thesis, because this kind of research provided data which revealed experiences which relate to

social and political climates--essences which quantitative information could not capture. Overall, in-depth interview/discussions as unstructured formats allowed for greater flexibility and depth on the questions. This thesis aims to expose those conditions through the stories of the Samoan college students who participated in the interviews.

Quantitative Component

The quantitative component of this research design involved analysis of census and school enrollment figures as a means of providing statistical information. Enrollment figures or the statistics on those who are expected to enroll in certain collegiate institutions, expulsion figures, grade point average performance, as well as the numbers of those who have completed the basic pre-college requirements, constructs a sense of the condition of the Samoan educational experience.

The primary sources of quantitative data were Census compact disks (CD-Rom) on race and geographic boundaries, 1990 resource guides on the general social and economic characteristics for populations in selected areas, and the World Wide Web. Several internet websites for California State University, University of California, California Community Colleges, and Los Angeles County School Districts provided the necessary figures for Pacific Islander students. In addition, certain staff and faculty at various South Bay area high schools provided very detailed information and statistics on enrollment and academic performance. Finally, the handbook on Asians and Pacific Islanders in the U.S. has proven a reliable source and summarization of 1990 Census data on socioeconomic and demographic figures for Samoans living in the States.

The 1990 Census data in CD-Rom format on the Samoan population in various counties and tracts were also accessed and *mapped* on programs such as Wessex Pro-filer®, TIGER 95®, and Arcview® which are available at the UCLA University Research Library's Maps and Government Documents Computer Laboratory. These programs not

only provided an abundance of current demographic information on various areas, they allowed me to produce detailed maps[6] on this information as well.

As a tool, the internet is a rich source of information. The internet contains volumes of websites for the University of California, California State University system, state-wide community colleges, and various school districts on national and local levels--including the Los Angeles Unified School District. Although these websites may not provide data on Pacific American students disaggregated into the specific Pacific Islander ethnic group categories represented in those institutions, they do indeed provide significant, relevant information.

Whether at parity or underrepresented within the California educational system, the numbers of Samoan students in colleges nation-wide remain minimal. Under this condition, Samoan college students continue to struggle to meet the challenges to organize and empower, or to fulfill their education as one of the fewer represented on college campuses.

In sum, the qualitative aspect brings to life what raw data does not. Due to time constraints, interviewing college students from various Southern California colleges was a more feasible[7] method.

Sampling Design

The nine respondents who comprised the sample for this study were obtained initially through purposive[8], and eventually a snowball[9] method of recruitment. Following the suggestion of my committee chair, I purposely selected college students since it is safe to contend that this group would be generally an elite section of students who are most able to articulate a wider range of ideas after longer years of experience and schooling. The larger portion, the remainder of the sample were located through a snowball method of reference from the initial informants--word-of-mouth. This required criteria for the construction of the sample for this study was that the participants were former or enrolled

undergraduate students from various colleges of Los Angeles County--ranging from either the University of California, California State University, or community college systems. The sample also required an age range of 18-45. The purpose for such an age spread was to accommodate those students who returned to college after taking time off for several years. I only controlled for ethnicity, age, and college status[10]. Four females and five males comprised the sample.

Data Collection

Carson, Long Beach, and Paramount subdivisions of Los Angeles County are known to contain the larger concentration of Samoans in Southern California. Higher educational institutions such as California State University at Long Beach, and California State University at Dominguez Hills, are bounded by these areas. Through the snowball-type method, I was able to locate students who attended schools outside of Carson as well such as Mount San Antonio College located in the east portion of Los Angeles County, and of course, UCLA in Westwood.

My method of data collection was, as mentioned before, primarily purposive and snowball. However, even before this project could be carried out, I had to develop a consent form[11] for the informants of this study to verify their consent, and ensure their anonymity for this project. Also, as a newcomer to Los Angeles, I devoted my initial quarters of graduate study to a type of ethnographic participant observation process. I chose to become familiar with Samoan students and community leaders from various colleges and areas around Southern California, respectively. Through the UCLA Asian American Studies Center's Student Community Projects, I was able to locate the members of Pacific Islands Students Association. Club meetings which were not only held at UCLA, but also jointly with other college campuses such as Long Beach, Mt. San Antonio College, and Dominguez Hills, provided an ideal context for qualitative methodology to occur. I began the purposive and snowball process within this setting.

I observed and participated in several Pacific Islander student meetings which were centered around the construction of outreach projects designed to help familiarize Samoan, Tongan, and other Pacific Islander high school students to a taste of college life. These projects were determined by consensus amongst the Pacific Islander American college students as a necessary and immediate response to the dillemma of the undereducation of Pacific Islander American youth. Gang involvement and shared apathy plague many younger Samoan students in high school or earlier on. Not only did college students respond to these issues, groups of Samoan ministers--**faifeau**, have also visited various high schools with significant Samoan populations like Carson, Long Beach Polytechnic, and Banning High Schools. Thus, in addition to student informants, I made an arrangement with a **faifeau** to locate Samoan college students amongst his congregation. I interviewed one of these respondents.

Many Pacific Islander and Samoan students in particular, find their experiences and ideas marginalized within the larger, more historically-grounded circles of other minority students--Asian American, African American, and Chicana/o students. A central intention of this thesis was to provide a vehicle for the expression of their ideas and needs which are indeed overlooked. The students who became involved in these interviews constantly reminded me of this need, and provided a great deal of enthusiastic support for this project.

I utilized a discussion guide instrument consisting of several questions (see appendix E) to conduct the interviews. This instrument was designed to focus on the three main areas of this project: the perceptions of challenges or barriers, the means of facing up to and/or overcoming these challenges, and the additional ideas or recommendations that come to mind. Accordingly, the instrument was organized into three main sections full of open-ended questions in addition to a control or preliminary background session. The duration of each interview session averaged two hours, and was recorded both in written

and audio-taped formats.[12] These tapes provided the primary source of qualitative data for this project.

The nine transcriptions - one for each respondent - were labeled D1-D9, and analyzed under content analysis.[13] I utilized this procedure in order to determine the appropriate sections for the general support structure of this thesis. From this analysis, I searched for general patterns or ideas as well as the unique perspectives each student had to offer.

Significance of the Study

This research is significant to Asian American studies and minority education in several ways. First, and foremost, much of the research that has been done on Samoans and education is primarily deficit-oriented[14] , or centered on describing the group attributes such as **faaSamoa** (the Samoan way of life) as a deficiency or factor for their underrepresentation, or other educational problems(Ryan, 1971: 4, 32, 35). Here are some examples.

> Some factors that have caused school problems, such as aggression and physical contact, have helped individual Samoans achieve visibility in the larger society. Their aggressive behavior and their ability to handle physical force, coupled with their large body size, have led many to local fame as football players. This is in direct contrast to other Asian groups whose participation and use of athletics as a source of upward mobility has been minimal.
>
> --Harry Kitano[15]

> Data on the status of Samoan students reveal that they suffer severe educational deprivation in many areas.
>
> --Patosina Luce in the Educational Needs of American Samoan students [16]

These observations are neither valid nor sufficient explanations for the difficulties Samoan students face. This research will attempt to reveal more realistic explanations of the educational needs of the Samoan community, tap into the larger processes which influence or create the barriers they face external to their community--within the educational system, and reveal the changes that are necessary within this educational system to

accommodate for these needs. This research, thus seeks to move away from deficit explanations and conclusions, and arrive at more sufficient, effective, and rational approaches to addressing the needs of Samoan youth.

Secondly, although there is always room for more research, a larger portion of minority educational research which has been devoted to the experiences of African American, Latino, Asian American, and Native American students. Also, within anthropological studies, there is a wide-array of research published on Samoan culture. Outside of this realm, and within education, this study seeks to incorporate the experiences of Pacific Americans--the voices of the overlooked amongst marginalized students--to minority research.

Asian American Studies as a field has amongst its reserved space much more room for expansion to foster the inclusion of the Pacific American experience. One of the pioneer scholars in the development of Asian American Studies--Sucheng Chan has mentioned that:

> Although Asian Americans and Pacific Islander Americans have been grouped together under a single rubric, and although the number of Pacific Islanders in a state such as California is rapidly increasing, most Asian Americans are quite ignorant about Pacific Islanders. Most Asian Americans do not know who Pacific Islanders are, and they know very little about the history and culture of Pacific Islanders. This state of ignorance is true not only of the public, but also of scholars as well(Chan (1982) in Luce, 1985).

Besides being a vehicle for venting student steam, one of the other aims of this study is to heighten awareness about one aspect of the Pacific American experience, and Pacific Islander culture for scholars as well as the general public.

Hopefully over a long-term basis, this research may also provide an impetus for a commitment to change in, or development of newer university-wide policies which may increase and improve the efforts to recruit and retain more Samoan and Pacific Islander students in college, and similarly, to recruit more Samoan and other Pacific American staff and faculty. There is a need for an improved academic outreach on behalf of colleges and

universities for this community. In any case, there is a need for further research on this subject, and the growth and implementation of more policies which can benefit the future for the youth of the Samoan Community along with other students of color.

Endnotes

[1] I will use the term Pacific American, Pacific Islander, and Pacific Islander American interchangeably. This term will pertain to the ethnic groups from Polynesia: primarily Hawai'i, Samoa, Tonga, Tahiti, and New Zealand (**Aotearoa**); Melanesia: primarily Fiji, and Micronesia: primarily Guam--**Chamorro**.

2 The model minority is an image of Asian Americans, primarily Japanese and Chinese Americans, which social scientists of the 1950s constructed and is a stereotype that the socioeconomic "success" of these groups makes them a model for other minorities to follow. For a greater discussion on the model minority image, see Sucheng Chen's (1991) *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History*: 167 - 169, Dana Takagi's (1992) *Retreat From Race*: 58-60, or , Stacy Lee's (1996) *Unraveling the Model Minority Stereotype*.

[3] I will use this term to refer to Native American, African American, Latina/o, Asian American, or Pacific American students.

[4] Exploratory research is a process of looking for "patterns, ideas, or hypotheses". Descriptive research is a process which "describes a phenomena as they exist"(Vogt, 1993: 67, 87).

[5] This type of process is "a kind of investigation in which a researcher participates as a member of the group she or he is studying"(Vogt, 1993: 166).

[6] First, I selected the appropriate data on geographic boundaries and built a table on a program called TIGER 95®. Then, in a similar fashion, in a program called Wessex Profiler®, I constructed a table on race attributes within the geographic area previously selected. Finally, the Arcview® program allowed me to combine the tables for race and geographic boundaries and produce a map which displayed this combined table. For this study, I produced a total of thirteen maps (see appendix section F) to visually demonstrate the proliferation and population spread of Samoan communities on a nation and state-wide level by county, and on a county level by census tract.

[7] Initially, I planned to interview a focus group of Samoan college students. It was more advantageous to interview the college students and working population individually because their employment locations are widely dispersed in various regions of Southern California. There was a greater difficulty in getting this sample together at one time for a focus group. Time constraints make interviewing college students more relevant.

[8] A purposive sample is "a sample composed of subjects selected deliberately (on purpose) by the researcher, usually because he or she thinks certain characteristics are typical or representative of the population"(Vogt, 1993: 182).

[9] A snowball sampling method refers to "a technique for finding research subjects (in which) one subject gives the researcher the name of another subject, who in turn provides the name of a third, and so on"(ibid, 1993: 213).

[10] Along the same line of reasoning, I did not control for more factors such as class status, economic background, birthplace (American, Western Samoa, the States, or abroad), again because differences in these areas can influence a greater range of ideas. Furthermore, while having a small sample size (nine students),

and thus an inability to arrive at any generalizations can be viewed as a limitation to this study, my contention is that this study's ability to produce a greater range-spread of ideas was instead a strength rather than a limitation.

[11] As a requirement for this study to proceed, those who chose to conduct such research must produce a consent form according to the standards of the Department of Human Subjects Protection. This form was designed to ensure that the research process and the subsequent use of data produced would not in any way harm the respondents who participated in the interview sessions. The respondents who comprised the sample had to agree also to signing an approval form to ensure that the data they provide in their interviews will remain anonymous. The form was also part of a process to exempt this study from review by the human subjects protection committee. The respondents were made aware of the nature and purpose of this study so that they would understand the intended use of the data they have provided. See Appendix B.

[12] I transcribed over 100 pages from the audio and written records.

[13] Content analysis is a research technique "used to describe and systematically analyze the content of written, spoken, or pictoral communication--such as books, newspapers, television programs, or interview transcripts"(ibid, 1993: 45).

[14] A model which is useful to this study not as a framework, but as a tool to critique other existing works on Samoan and Pacific Islander students is the cultural deficit model based on William Ryan's work, *Blaming the Victim.*. One of the main foundations of this study is to determine how the strengths and resiliance of Samoan students has helped them to overcome the odds. Another aim is to look at the factors which account for the odds themselves. Within that regard, this study will look to structural entities: the school system, the programs which were intended to serve underrepresented minorities, or the lack thereof which have in a sense caused them to fail. Of the literature on Samoan youth, few authors expose the factors outside the Samoan Community which account for academic problems. William Ryan (1971) calls this practice "blaming the victim." or "cultural deficit" That is a cultural deficit perspective is exemplified when one focuses only on the problems and attributes within the group itself while failing to account for the external, societal and larger institutional factors which have a much greater, yet less visible role in the cause of these problems.

[15] Kitano, H. 1985. *Race Relations.* 3rd Edition. New Jersey: Prentice Hall: 212.

[16] Luce, P. 1985. The Educational Needs of American Samoan Students. ED 257 886: 1.

CHAPTER TWO:

Social Contexts From the Past to the Present

A Brief Background Overview

Some scholars have found comfort in using simple explanations for the academic challenges and disappointments students of color face.

> Many young Samoans lack incentive for and interest in obtaining a formal education. Their culture has not placed a high value on occupations and achievements requiring basic education.
>
> --Pei Ngor Chen in Samoans in California[1]

Much to the contrary of this statement, education always was, and continues to be a primary infrastructure in the **faaSamoa**, the Samoan way of life, and remains as one of the many reasons that Samoan families continue to migrate to the United States. As one of many general aims of this study, this chapter seeks to construct a more realistic scenario of the essence of the Samoan educational experience in the States through various discussions: the proliferation of these communities in the US from an initial glimpse at Samoan history --briefly tracing the roots of these communities to Samoa, migrations from Samoa abroad, and finally, shifting the view to the States to focus on the contemporary issues, challenges, and dillemmas Samoan youth face in school, and in general.

A Brief Historical Discussion

Samoa: The Source

The Samoan Islands are a group of the many islands located centrally within Polynesia.[2] Polynesia is an area consisting of thousands of islands in the Pacific Ocean bounded in a triangular pattern by Hawai'i on the north point, **Aotearoa** or New Zealand on the Southwest point, and **Rapa Nui** or Easter Island on the Southeast point. The Samoan archipelago itself consists of main island groupings: **Tutuila** and the **Manu'a** group --**Ofu**, **Olosega**, and **Ta'u** -- comprise what is now known as American Samoa;

Savai'i, **Manono**, **Apolima**, and **Upolu** comprise the islands which as of July 1997 changed from Western Samoa to Samoa (See page 99 in the Appendix).

Although there are various and often conflicting perspectives about the origin of Samoa[3] and Polynesia in general, most scholars agree that Polynesians can trace their origins back 5000 years ago to the Austronesians who occupied a region in Southeast Asia geographically known as **Sahul**. (Oliver, 1989: 4-6), Va'a, 1995: 40). Cultural-linguistic patterns provide evidence for this assertion. The Austronesians spoke a language that was similar to that within Indonesia and the Phillipines which were part of **Sahul**. The strongest pilar of support by far for the contention that Polynesians were from Austronesia was archaeological evidence that the Austronesians utilized a pottery pattern technique from an Austronesian culture known as **Lapita**. **Lapita** was found in a regional pattern which initialized in **Sahul**, and finally flourished in Tonga and Samoa.

The **Lapita** peoples themselves were considered a sea-faring group of colonists, skilled at navigating the open ocean. The Samoan **tatau** [4] contains many symbols which resemble **Lapita** patterns. Archaeologists and other scientific teams have compiled evidence with the use of Carbon 14 dating techniques that as early as 1,000 BC the **Lapita** peoples have established settlements on the Samoan islands. The Samoans were often referred to as the "Vikings of the Pacific"(Bousseau, 1993: 5) as their early trade contacts with other Pacific Islands, and possibly even Southeast Asia exemplified their elite utilization of outrigger canoes to navigate across the rough, unpredictable open ocean.

During this period, the Samoan islands and its increasing population provided the backdrop for the genesis of a culture known as the **faaSamoa**, the Samoan way of life (Va'a, 1995). From 1,000 BC to 1722 AD, a time-span of nearly 3,000 years, the Samoan people, and **faaSamoa** developed and flourished free from contact and intervention from outsiders, particularly Westerners.

The Arrival of the Palagi: Primary Contacts With the West

June 14, 1722 marked the year the first **palagi** [5] or Westerners dropped anchor off of the **Manu'a** group. The Dutch West India Company sent a fleet led by navigator Jacob Roggeveen to expand the boundaries of its trading ventures. In May 1768, French navigator Bougainville, several decades following Roggeveen's first and last visit to the islands, coined the term "Navigators' Islands' in reference to Samoa as he was influenced in awe at the incredible skill and knowledge the Samoans demonstrated in designing and maneuvering their canoes (Va'a, 1995: 40).

The third **palagi** visit to the islands in 1787 was the first time a European made a successful landing. French explorer La Perouse landed in the village of **Asu** on **Tutuila**. The initially peaceful visit was followed by a bloody battle which led to the death of twelve of La Perouse's men, and several Samoans. The group of Western Samoans may have acted in retaliation for being punished for "stealing" from La Perouse's ship.

The primary impact of these initial contacts between Western and Samoan societies affected the stability of Samoan sovereignty. The metals that were introduced as trading items allowed for the development of more sophisticated weaponry amongst various rivalries. For that matter, there was an increase in warfare amongst Samoans in the islands.

These incidents during this time frame marked the initial growth of European and American economic interests -- whaling, the trading of furs, sandalwood, and other marine products -- in many islands of the Pacific. Although the violent encounter involving La Perouse's crew made Samoa appear hostile to European and American traders, the trading activities nevertheless continued with Samoa as a regular stop for restocking supplies to these fleets (Meleisea, 1987a: 44-45).

Divide and Conquer: A Policy of European and American Colonial Interests

The early half of the nineteenth century marked the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in Europe, and the emergence of a powerful business class -- merchants, factory owners, and traders(Meleisea, 1987a: 46-47). The British Empire, Germany, France, along with the United States following a similar path: a concept of Manifest Destiny, the belief in conquering the Western frontier, were determined in competition with each other to place their flags of territorial possession around the world. The wealth these countries accumulated via the exploitation of human labor from Asia, Africa, and the islands of the Pacific, provided the necessary capital and resources for successful colonial expansion. Religious crusades in the Pacific accompanied European competition for territorial and material possession.

John Williams and Charles Barff, the two representatives of the London Missionary Society could not have chosen a more timely visit to Samoa for their mission in 1830. The period of 1830 - 1900 marked the emergence of sporadic land disputes between the Samoan **matai** , chiefs, leaders, and Europeans, and amongst Samoan **matai** themselves. Land titles were the core of **faaSamoa**, and many of the Great Powers [6] became involved in these land struggles. This period marked an era of civil war (Meleisea, 1987b: 21- 45). The opposing clans **Sa Tupua** (the title **Sa** refers to the clan) and **Sa Malietoa** were vying for land titles, and the **malo**, the political ruling faction of Samoa. Their conflict was one example of the turmoil and civil war which embroiled within the Samoan islands. Adding fuel to the fire were the European powers who sided with either **malo** (1995: 43).

Malietoa Vaiinupo, the new leader of the **malo** chose to embrace and incorporate the **lotu** - Christianity - into Samoan culture. This action provided a context for increased European visits to Samoa, a greater influx of European material goods, the expansion of mercantile activities and whaling, and eventually, the appointment of ambassadors to

represent German, British, and American interests in Samoa (Va'a, 1995: 42). This increased interaction between Western and Samoan cultures in turn also led to: 1) the subsequent introduction and utilization of a cash economy, and 2) the need, from a Eurocentric point of view, for a stable government to regulate these activities in the midst of political chaos (1995; 42). Regarding the latter effect, Meleisea (1987b) summarizes the paternalistic Eurocentrism that prevailed during that time:

> ...the inherent instability of the non-centralised traditional political system of the Samoans left Germany, Britain and the United States "no other choice" but to take control of Samoa in the form of a colony. This Eurocentric verdict takes no account of the long struggle among the Samoans for a viable central government to protect Samoan sovereignty, and the repeated sabotage of these efforts by rival European factions motivated by their claims to Samoan land (Meleisea, 1987b: 42).

European and American Acquisition of Samoan Land

The chaos that characterized this time frame is exemplified in the land and its titles gradually being alienated from the hands of Samoans. Samoa became vulnerable to the efforts of Europeans to colonize, and acquire land. The Great Powers responsible for exacerbating the dillemma finally decided to come to their consensus through the Treaty of Berlin in 1899 on the issue of who was going to get what. During that year, Germany and the United States divided up their control over the land. Britain withdrew its claim of ownership over Samoa as it focused more on its political colonization of Tonga, and areas of Africa. Germany took control over Western Samoa, while the United States took claim over its first possession in the Southern hemisphere: the **Manu'a** group, **Tutuila**, and **Aunu'u**, eastern portions of Samoa which are now American Samoa (Va'a, 1995: 43).

At present, American Samoa remains a territory of the United States. The American Samoan government is based on the US model which includes the House of Representatives, and a Senate. As a US territory, the US Secretary of the Interior has the ultimate authority over matters in American Samoa (Va'a, 1995: 43). Western Samoa in 1962 became the first island in the South Pacific to gain independence after a long period of

struggle: the **Mau**[7] movement against the New Zealand colonial administration (Field, 1987).

President McKinley appointed the US Navy as the administrative authority over American Samoa (Kiste, 1994: 245). In 1929, Congress formally but discreetly annexed Samoa as territory of the United States (Kotchek, 1976: 2), adding Samoans to America's ethnic minority groups. In that context, the Samoan incorporation into American society began not when the migration waves occured in 1951. The United States forcibly made Samoans their subjects nearly a century ago when the Great Powers took control of the islands in 1899. As far as the change in **ola faaSamoa**, the Samoan way of life was concerned:

> Western imperialistic influences brought new ways of life. Samoans could either uphold the old culture, or deviate from it. When the islands were divided, only one thing became certain. The Samoan culture was never going to be the same (Milford, 1985: 53).

The Educational System in Samoa

One of the major impositions of change European and American colonization brought to Samoans was a different educational system. Education in the Samoan islands did not begin with the arrival of the **palagi**. The missionaries and Americans superimposed their educational system over the one which continues to function under **faaSamoa**. Samoan culture **always** contained an educational infrastructure. The knowledge of **faaSamoa**, Samoan customs, roles and responsibilities, and the way this knowledge was disseminated **is** education. In the **faaSamoa**, Samoan education was the daily village life. Before there were formal written language, schools, and professional teachers, the Samoan way of life was and continues to be taught to each new generation through the institutions of the **aiga**[8] the family, and the **nu'u**, the village. Children learn the rewards of doing things correctly and the punishment associated with failure through observing and participating in the activities within that community. Older children are

assigned by their elders the responsibilities of caring for, and being another teacher to their younger siblings. The distinct, roles of men and women, young and old, and the complexity of Samoan society in general (Thomas in Postlewaite, 1984) are anything but the simplistic views of Samoans held by many scholars, including foremost anthropologist on Samoa -- the late Margaret Mead.[9] Family-life education persists in some form or another to this day even within the superimposed Western concepts of schooling.

With colonization of both American and Western Samoa, the missionaries introduced a schooling system in which classes were to be taught primarily in English by non-Samoans. Much later, many Samoans educated abroad were appointed as teachers. In any case, Samoan youth are compelled to learn English. This imposition of English-only instruction in Samoa facilitated language barriers between European and American administrators and **matai** (Milford, 1985: 53), and between younger and older generations of Samoans as well.

Today, schooling in Western Samoa is not meeting the needs of its younger, growing population. Only one percent of students of the students who pass University Entrance examinations go on to institutions of higher education outside of Samoa. The remainder either opt to attend local institutions, or return to the family, much dissatisfied (Tavana, 1997: 12). Over half of the high school graduates from American Samoa now head to the United States annually to continue their education, or to simply leave (Kiste, 1994: 249, Barringer, 1993: 290). The rest attend the local American Samoa Community College, or remain with the **nu'u** to take care of other more personal issues.

Much to the contrary of deficit explanations on Samoan culture and education, one of the primary reasons behind the waves of outmigration from Samoa to the United States or abroad is a response to a failed educational system Europeans and Americans imposed onto Samoa. Samoans are migrating to improve the educational opportunities for the next generation.

Migrations and the Formation of Samoan Communities Abroad

Decades of change associated with the colonization of the islands set the context for a series of migrations out of Samoa. When the US naval base in **Pago Pago** closed in 1951, both unemployment and birth rates rose at a rate which facilitated, or more appropriately "forced" a mass exodus of Samoans from American Samoa to Hawai'i, and subsequent migrations from there to the major west coast cities on the continental U.S. (Mokuau, 1994: 156). At that same time, the cash crop economy there was devastated by a dry spell, a strike, and overall, a period of recession (Va'a, 1995: 53). This was known as the **Fita Fita** migration.[10] The closing brought an initial movement. The construction of an airport in **Safune** from 1962, generated the contemporary waves of out-migration from American Samoa (Alailima, 1996: 82). Western Samoans followed their neighbors in migration, and comprise the larger portion of the population makeup of American Samoa (Shankman, 1994: 157).

Currently, many scholars agree upon the factors related to the out-migration of Samoans abroad (Shankman, 1994, Mokuau, 1994). That is, Samoan migration is related to: 1) increasing population growth in the islands, 2) greater educational opportunities abroad, 3) the slowing of the island economy, and 4) greater job opportunities for youth abroad. Furthermore, with regards specifically to American Samoa, migration occured essentially without choice for many Samoans after the transfer of the US naval base to Hawai'i (Mokuau, 1994).

American and Western Samoa each continue to undergo their own unique out-migration patterns (See page 100). Western Samoans contribute to the growth of Samoan communities in Auckland and Wellington on New Zealand, in Sydney, Australia (Va'a, 1995), and within Samoan communities from American Samoa. Namely these Samoan communities have formed in Honolulu, Hawai'i, in Seattle, Washington, in San Francisco,

San Diego, and Los Angeles, California. In 1990, cities in California and Washington contain large Samoan communities outside of Hawai'i.

In Hawai'i, the subdivisions of Kalihi-Pālama, Lā'ie, and Kahuku are the main areas in Honolulu county, the island of O'ahu, where there are significant concentrations of Samoans. In Washington, the smaller metropolitan subdivisions of High Point, Rainier Beach, the West and South Central parts of Seattle have growing Samoan communities. San Francisco and San Mateo Counties appear to be a regions containing high concentrations of Samoans in the Bay area. Oceanside and National City as well as North, Central, and South San Diego within San Diego County, contain large Samoan communities (Mamak and Luce, 1982). In Los Angeles County where this study is centered, Carson, Paramount, Lomita, Wilmington, Torrance, and Long Beach of the South Bay area have high concentrations of Samoans. Refer to the maps[11] in the appendix.

The Sociodemographic Context of US Samoan Communities

Although Samoans became European and American subjects long before their first waves of migration, many since 1951 have moved to the mainland United States. 1990 Census data appears to suggest that Samoans via Hawai'i are moving primarily to California and Washington. Next to Hawaiians (211,104), Samoans (62,964) are the second largest Pacific Islander American ethnic group. As of 1990, the Census has determined California to hold the largest percentage of Samoans in the United States at 50.7 percent of the Samoan population, or 31,923 Samoans who were accounted for during that survey. Hawai'i now remains in second place with 23.9 percent, or an estimated 15,048 Samoans living there. The population of Pacific Islanders in Washington has appeared to double since the 1980 Census. Amongst the Pacific Islanders there, Samoans comprise 6.6 percent of the national total of Samoans, or just under 5,000 (Barringer, 1993: 274).

Hawai'i appears to be losing its Samoan population to the coastal U.S. regions -- particularly California (Va'a, 1995) where this study is concentrated.

In California, where many Samoans have migrated for "more job opportunities" Shu and Satele (1977) have found that the unemployment rate amongst the Samoans there was 39 percent from 1980. As of 1990, in Honolulu, over 30 percent of the Samoans reside in public housing projects (SEED, 1993: 2). Mokuau (1993) has described Samoans as "one of the most disadvantaged minority groups of color in the United States based on such indicators as poverty, and unemployment." Shu and Satele's (1977) study on the conditions and needs of Samoans in California has concluded that Samoans are underserved and overlooked in terms of health care, educational intervention, adequate housing, and job placement assistance. The needs of the Samoan community which Shu and Satele outlined over twenty years ago, appear to remain intact.

Educational Attainment and Occupational Status

Asian Pacific Americans as mentioned before, are viewed as a monolithic entity. The expanded view of this constituent, especially when demographic factors are analyzed reveals an ethnically stratified context in which Samoans and Pacific Islanders occupy very challenging positions within an economically and racially stratified hierarchy. Los Angeles is perhaps one of the most diverse, multi-ethnic counties as well as the site for this study. These are comparative figures for Los Angeles County based on 1990 Census data for "Selected Racial Groups" for a college aged cohort of 18 - 24 years of age.

Educational Attainment for 18 -24 Year Old Cohort:

Category:	High School Graduate or Higher	Some College	Bachelor's Degree	Enrolled in College
All Asians	82.1%	57.8%	12.8%	58.9%
Chinese	82.7%	58.5 %	15.5%	66.3%
Japanese	91.1%	66.5%	13.6%	66.1%
Korean	82.3%	56.1%	11.6%	62.4%
Asian Indian	86.2%	65.3%	21.3%	60.4%
Vietnamese	69.1%	46.4%	09.7%	50.5%
Pacific Islanders	**69.4%**	**34.2%**	**03.9%**	**29.7%**
Hawaiian	83.0%	52.8%	09.2%	43.5%

	High School Graduate or Higher	Some College	Bachelor's Degree	Enrolled in College
Samoan	**67.9%**	**25.4%**	**01.1%**	**23.6%**
Guam	51.7%	22.5%	03.7%	17.0%
American Indian	62.8%	36.2%	04.6%	26.5%
Black	31.9%	35.4%	03.7%	29.4%
White	24.7%	36.5%	08.3%	34.7%
Hispanic(any race)	23.2%	18.5%	01.8%	19.6%

Source: 1990 Social and Economic Characteristics for California: Tables 162, and 152.

In Los Angeles County, of Pacific Islanders, Samoans have a slightly higher enrollment in college (23.6%) than students from Guam (17.0%), and Hispanic(19.6%). However, these figures for college enrollment and the attainment of a bachelor's degree or higher amongst Samoans are much lower than the rate for Blacks, Whites, and Asians as a whole.

Occupational Characteristics in Los Angeles County for Persons 16 Years or Older

Status: Group:	White	Black	American Indian	Asian	Hispanic	Pacific Islander	**Samoan**
Managerial/Professional	33.1%	24.5%	22.6%	32.1%	10.8%	15.4%	**10.5%**
Professional Specialty	17.4%	13.5%	11.7%	16.4%	05.0%	09.9%	**04.4%**
Sales, Technical support	33.0%	38.0%	32.4%	39.9%	23.7%	36.1%	**39.3%**
Administrative, clerical	16.9%	25.8%	19.9%	19.4%	13.7%	24.5%	**30.0%**
Service	10.1%	15.4%	13.5%	10.4%	18.1%	15.1%	**14.3%**
Operators, laborers	11.9%	13.2%	16.2%	00.9%	29.8%	17.6%	**22.0%**
Labor Force Participation	--------	------	69.6%	66.4%	--------	69.3%	59.8%

Occupational attainment amongst Samoans was low in the 1980 time frame. In terms of occupational attainment, Samoans were represented largely in labor, operators, and manufacturing positions (Barringer, 1993, Franco, 1987, Shu and Satele, 1977). In Los Angeles County from 1990, Samoans comprise 22.0% of the laborers, but were more represented in sales, clerical, and technical support jobs. In management, Samoans remain least represented (10.5%) compared to Whites (33.1%), Blacks (24.5%), and Asians (32.1%). Their numbers in management are nearly equitable to the Hispanics(10.8%).

In Honolulu, which many people might view as a "racial paradise" because of its multi-cultural atmosphere, the realities of racial stratification are exemplified by a similarly larger representation of Hawaiians, Filipinos,and Samoans in the lower rungs of

occupational and educational status (Okamura, 1989). Furthermore, Shankman's description of Western Samoans paints a picture of what life is like for many Samoans who reside in the United States:

> ...as an ethnic minority at the bottom of the social hierachy, Samoans are having trouble abroad. In Hawai'i and the continental United States, Western Samoans often live in government or substandard housing in crowded living conditions; they are poor, unemployment is high, , and they live in or near crime-ridden areas (Shankman, 1994: 161).

As mentioned before, Samoans have formed communities in major cities such as Honolulu, San Francisco, Seattle, Los Angeles, and San Diego, all of which are areas of major economic competition. As of today, getting a job is perhaps ever-more difficult than it was a decade ago. Although unemployment has decreased slightly in the 1990s, and Samoans may now be more firmly entrenched within the labor force at 59.8%, their occupational status overall appears to remain generally at the entry level positions.

Employment equates to income, and the economic concern described here may be even worse since there are demands on Samoan families to send remittances to their families in Samoa to take care of **faalavelave**[12] or life-cycle events like funerals and other family emergencies when necessary. The financial challenge Samoan families face to meet the rising cost of living is greater as many Samoans with a modest income struggle to meet the needs of their families, and make a living for themselves.

Issues of Concern Within Samoan Communities in the United States

Police Brutality

> My daddy knelt. Why 12 Bullets?
> --Sign carried by Niles Tualaulelei, son of a victim of police violence.

Samoans have become, on more than a few occasions, victims of racially-motivated police brutality. In February 1991, Compton police officer Skiles responded to an incident which he ended by shooting Pouvi and Italia Tualaulelei, both unarmed, to death. Skiles was later acquitted [13]. In 1989 at a bridal shower Melinda Dole Papao in Cerritos, the Los

Angeles County Sherriff's department raided a bridal shower and brutally beat 36 Samoan men and women. The videotaped evidence of the beatings presented a strong case for the victims who won a $23 million dollar suit against the Sherriff's Department. Not long before that, in Hawai'i, Honolulu police officers choked a Samoan man to death in Waikiki. June Pouesi discussed the way police officers racialize Samoans to rationalize their abusive behavior:

> After being shot ten times, could any logical person believe that the brothers would have been in any shape to threaten anyone? You could only believe that story if you believe that Samoans are monsters -- not human.
>
> --June Pouesi, Office of Samoan Affairs.

> When you come up against a 250-pound Polynesian, you'd better have some backup or you're going to get your melon thumped.
>
> --Bill Robertson, Salt Lake County Sherriff's Gang Unit.

American society racializes Polynesians to be threatening people with superhuman strength, and violent aggression: like wild, exotic animals. Shankman (1994) has described earlier how the images of Samoans upon their arrival in the US changes from the "noble savage" to the "dangerous" and "threatening Samoan." The effects of this image has already proven deadly when law enforcement and society in general associate these images with Samoans, and other Pacific Islander Americans.

There is a continued need for long-term commitments to meetings between law enforcement and representatives from the Samoan community who can articulate greater understandings of Samoan culture, and other ways that interactions can resolve with compromise instead of violence. Since these incidents have occured, the Los Angeles Police Department is making efforts to recruit more Pacific Islander Americans in the police force. This is only a primary step, for a long-term commitment to truly serving ethnic communities is needed indeed.

Asians and Pacific American Relations

Looking in a directory on websites or simply trying to find a service for Pacific Islanders, or Pacific Americans will usually yield many organizations with a prefix such as "Asian Pacific Islander Task Force on.....", "Asians and Pacific Islanders in.....". Yet the representation of any Pacific American member on these task forces or in these coalitions is negligible. Within the Pan Asian American spectrum, Pacific Islanders feel alienated (Mamak and Luce, 1982).

The Asian Pacific Islander grouping in Census, and other kinds of statistical data overwhelms the Pacific Islander voice within it. The Asian American grouping itself is diverse comprising Koreans, Filipinos, Vietnamese, Thai, Cambodian, Laotian,Hmong, and South Asians, whose issues, needs, and different cultural histories are just beginning to be addressed. Their distinct histories fosters a diversity amidst the historically East Asian (largely Japanese, Chinese, and Korean) bias that is associated with the term "Asian American". As many of the latter are perceived as "the model minority success", Federal assistance is difficult to come by when this grouping is used synonymously with Asian Americans. The fact that Southeast Asian and Pacific Islander communities have higher rates of poverty than other Asian American groups suggests that this community is at risk, and deserves special attention (Carter and Wilson, 1997: 49).

Only in 1980 has the Census disaggregated the Pacific Islander community, and for that matter, separate it from Asian American categories. Most data on Pacific Islanders is still fused together as an Asian Pacific Islander category. Awareness alone has not created much infrastructure and agency to address these needs.

Samoan Youth Caught Up in Gang Life

> I think that lately I've just begun to understand the whole gang thing. You know for a long time I felt well, all the gangsters, they're just losers who'd rather just have a good time, and not really work hard to secure their future...I've heard stories of Mexicans tattooing "Samoan Killer" on their bodies and hitting up on the walls. I mean even myself when I hear something like that it gets me

> thinking...what's going on? I've got to watch my back..and as soon as I start thinking that way, then I understand the need why these guys want to join a gang. It's for protection....it's a reality.
> -- (D7: 2).

> I seen blood all over the ground. It looked like someone emptied out 40 bottles of ketchup. I tried to see who was bleeding. So I asked some lady that was standing outside about the blood. She said some Samoan guy just got shot. She said it like she was tellin' it for the hundredth time, like she been tellin' it all her life.
> -- Fotu, from *Fate of the Hood.*

The Samoan youth of the 1980s to now have been involved with, or have become victims of drive-by shootings, and other serious crimes associated with gang involvement. Although gang involvement is not representative of the Samoan community, Samoan gang members are not a new and peculiar anomaly to the Samoan community either. As with academics, the gang issue is pervasive. That is, there are Samoan gangs in California,' Washington, and in Hawai'i. 18% of the gang members in Honolulu, for example, are Samoan (Chesney-Lind et.al., 1992: 1). In Utah as well, a Police study estimates that 10% of gang members there are Pacific Islanders (Hamilton in Newsweek, 1996). Some Samoan youth who feel alienated amongst a mainstream environment become susceptible to recruitment into gangs. The needs of some youth if not addressed by educators, parents, or other institutions, can easily be addressed amongst gangs (Bousseau, 1993).

> The gang role model is around all the time. The gang role model actually shows you, 'hey, you're in a gang,' it's immediate. It's right there, and it makes a lot of sense (D7: 13).

Former gang members may provide a key resource to steering youth who are involved, or vulnerable, away from this lifestyle into what might be more feasible and useful to them in long-term. That is, Samoan youth may be more apt to listen to, and heed the advice of other Samoan or Pacific American youth who have "been there"[14]. Siolo Tofaeono used to recruit Samoan youth into gangs. Under Betty Patu, Siolo is a resource to recruiting Samoan youth back into school. Teachers in the neighboring classes get

advice from Patu as to appropriate educational methodologies teachers need to know and apply to better serve Samoan students.

Educational Issues Facing Samoan Youth

High Incidents of Expulsion

> Forget about them. They're better left outside.
> --A Seattle Public School teacher referring to Samoan students.

Former Seattle city council woman, and now a contender for a seat in the Washington State Senate, Betty Patu prevented things from getting worse for Samoan students at Rainier Beach High School. Betty Patu would literally go to the houses of Samoan youth who quit coming to classes, and in one case, she interrupted a meeting of the Crips gang to force some of her students back to class (New York Times, July 28, 1992). She started the South Pacific Dropout Prevention Program. Samoans comprise the majority of the students within this program. During the summer she started the Gang Prevention Program in which volunteers keep "at-risk"[15] filling out job and college applications instead of getting into trouble.

The incidence of kickouts or expulsions[16], remains high (Luce, 1985: 3) amongst Samoan high school students at an average of about 74 percent (Bousseau, 1993: 4). Between the 9th and 12th grade, of all public high schools in Los Angeles County, Pacific Islanders are third place at 5.0 percent in terms of dropping out compared to "Hispanics" (6.3 percent), and Blacks (7.6 percent) (www.lacoe.edu, 1997). Language barriers, discrimination, and teacher misunderstandings of Samoan culture creates an environment which alienates students, and forces, or kicks them out. Again, the kickout issue and academic failure can be described as pervasive. Not only did Samoan students leave school, or have grades low enough to put them at-risk in Seattle, the pattern was also evident in every city where Samoan communities proliferated. This pattern is reflective of a school system which has failed to effectively serve Samoan students.

Academic Failure

Standardized examinations are not the best indicators of talent and achievement (Astin, 1979). However, these examinations are standard requirements for higher educational access. Pacific Islanders, with verbal scores on average at 434 on verbal, and 423 in math in their Scholastic Aptitude Tests in 1997, have the lowest average SAT scores on a national level (College Board, 1997 in The Pacific Islander).

In Honolulu, the graduation rates of Samoan high school seniors was, in 1992-93, a low of 86 percent compared to numbers for other ethnic groups such as Whites(93%), Filipinos(93%), Japanese (96%), part-Hawaiians(89%), and Chinese (94%)(SEED, 1993: 4). Carson High School in Los Angeles County has a Pacific Islander enrollment of 6.1 percent (Ethnic Analysis of Carson High School, 1997, Los Angeles Unified School District School Accountability Report, 1996), most of whom are Samoan. In June 1996, 57 percent of the Pacific Islander students there had grade point averages less than 2.00 (Final Marks, 1997). These findings all are indicative that Pacific Islander students deserve special attention.

In Carson, many of the **faifeau**, the ministers, have been going to Carson High School to encourage students to stay in school. Their actions combined with concerned Samoan and Pacific Islander college students were a response to over 74 percent of Pacific Islander students leaving school (Bousseau, 1993). At the time Betty started her program, the Samoan high school dropout rate in the Seattle Public School system was 26.3 percent. Her efforts brought that rate to 8.6 percent within a short time span. In any case, teachers and administrators need to be aware that Samoan students deserve special attention and service to improve their academic achievement, retention, and graduation rates in order to increase their opportunities to gain access to an education beyond high school.

Samoans in College: Marginalization and Minimal Representation

The Sulufa'iga[17]

In 1994, the Office of Student Equity, Excellence, and Diversity (SEED) at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, produced a task force report on Samoan and Pacific Islanders students within the University of Hawai'i educational system -- the **Sulufa'iga**. Hawai'i, which contains several Samoan communities on the island of O'ahu, had over 5,288 Samoan students in its school system in 1992-93 (SEED, 1994: 3). At present, most high schools and Universities, do not disaggregate the Pacific Islander category into the distinct ethnic groupings. It is safe to contend, however, that Samoan students comprise the larger portion of that category.

The University of Hawai'i may contain systemic structures which are different from those in California, and other mainland U.S. colleges. Hawai'i, which has accommodated a Samoan community much earlier than California, appears to be ahead of mainland with respect to providing services that recognize and address the needs of Samoans students. Samoans were more "visible" there (Kotchek, 1976: 36). Nevertheless, the SEED report reveals problems Samoan students face within the University of Hawai'i system that may indeed parallel those that Samoan students on the mainland encounter:

> 1) There are no programs except for student-run programs, and the Samoan Language and Culture Program at UH where Samoan students can go for academic, financial aid, and support. There are other minority aid programs for specific groups such as Filipino students, but without one specifically for Samoan students, many feel marginalized, and uncertain as to whether the existing programs will be helpful or relevant to them. Samoan students there have continually expressed their desire to have a home base.
>
> 2) There is no existing outreach to Samoan, or for that matter, Pacific Islander students. Advisors do not appear to give adequate advice, and for the most part, are not bicultural, or qualified to work with Samoan students.
>
> 3). There is no effective orientation program to prepare Samoan and other Pacific Islander students for campus life.

4) There is a lack of Samoan and Pacific Islander staff as counselors , advisors who are able to assist Samoan students. Student run groups like **Samoa Fealofani** are making the efforts to provide service to Samoan students, but back to the fact that there is no home base, no office, and negligible resources, this group struggles to help incoming and returning Samoan and Pacific Islander students.

5) Local high schools do not effectively prepare Samoan students for higher educational opportunities. Low expectations amongst counselors there have often made Samoan students feel that college is for other ethnic groups.

6) Many Samoan students face a challenge to meet obligations at home while trying to meet those required in the academic setting. This causes some to try to move out on their own--creating an even greater financial crisis for them.

7) There is very little media effort to communicate and disseminate information in general about programs available to serve Samoan students. The University needs to utilize the available varieties of Polynesian newspapers, the four Samoan radio programs, and the two Samoan language television programs as a medium through which this information can be channeled.

8) Some Samoan parents may face the challenge of having too high an income to qualify for their children's financial aid, and at the same time are bound to contribute to family expenditures. Some Samoan students may be bound to taking care of their family, and may forego their education to do so[18]

In retrospect of these problems, just like in Hawai'i, student-run organizations in California colleges have emerged in response to a lack of support services specific to Samoan, and other Polynesian students who comprise the larger percentage of the small Pacific Islander representations in higher education. With regards to the second cited problem, outreach *does* exist. The orientation program can be part of the student-run, or better yet, a funded outreach service. Again, the effort is student-run by concerned Samoan and Pacific Islander American students who are in college. As students, they struggle to get funding from student government funding boards. Students in these groups work late into the night to produce proposals, and get these proposals in by the deadlines that are set while taking on the responsibility of their own studies. They drive to the neighboring high schools on their own time. Everything is voluntary. If there were a staffed, funded position for someone who could do these things, the second problem could be knocked out of the way.

With regards to the fifth problem, Samoan students in California, and those whom I interviewed for this project generally reflected the same apathy towards their high school staff who they believed, for the most part, did not adequately prepare them for college-life if they had any contact with them at all. There hopefully will be more staffing of Pacific Islander counselors, or advisors, and eventually professors.

The structural differences between Hawai'i and California regarding social services for Pacific Islanders are different. There is no Samoan radio program in Los Angeles. There are, however, Samoan newspapers based in Hawai'i, and circulated in west coast cities. Thus, there is a medium through which information can be disseminated to Samoan parents and youth to a certain extent. However, not all Samoans live in Carson or Long Beach. The vastness of Los Angeles County often times does not allow for all Samoans who live there to get this information.

Marginalized Within the Margins

> We are labeled as a minority within a minority, and we want to change that.
> --Student host of a Pacific Islander student conference.

Samoan students on college campuses are almost like Kotchek's (1977) reference to Samoans in Seattle, "invisible". They find that their issues are masked amongst other minority groups who have larger representations on campus. Some students, for example, have had to rely on being grouped in with Asian Pacific coalitions to have their interests served. Upon many occasions, Asian American issues very distant from Pacific American issues get more publicity, and usually supersede the voices of Samoan, and other Polynesian students. Amongst other students of color, Pacific Islander college students are commiting their efforts to forming their own organizations, and empowering themselves to have their voices and issues heard.

As discussed earlier in reference to a section on Asian and Pacific American relations, the problems occur in statistical reference. That is, Pacific Islander students are

hidden -- marginalized within this grouping, and their actual representations in terms of enrollment, attrition, and other factors are very difficult to access. This categorization creates a problem when students need to develop proposals for funding for outreach. Usually student-government approval for subsidies for outreach is a response to a demonstration of minimal representation of a group in a certain area. In this case, Samoans and Pacific Islanders in general are very minimally represented in college campuses. If concerned students or staff are not able to state how many Pacific Islander students there are, then they will not demonstrate how small their representation is, and consequently, they will not able to justify their need for funding for such outreach. Fortunately the webmasters of certain websites have broken this category off as a separate Pacific Islander cluster. This kind of data is useful for such proposals.

Samoan students from various colleges in California have recently made a concerted effort to unite under a large, umbrella organization of various Pacific Island student clubs. In an effort to address the issues of minimal representation, high dropouts, low numbers of Pacific Islander faculty, these students united in November for a conference at the University of California at Los Angeles (Ortutay, 1997). Samoan students by virtue of this effort, have taken a primary step in overcoming the minority within a minority label.

Minimal Representation and Alienation

It is a pleasant surprise to walk through a campus with a large, diverse constituent of Pacific Islander students. For that matter, finding another Samoan, Tongan or other Pacific American student on college campuses--even in Hawai'i is also a rare occasion. A friend of mine who became an academic counselor for the Letters and Science Division of UCLA recalls, "The day I saw him (Another Samoan student) walking around campus wearing his **'ie lavalava**, I had to tell myself, 'Say it isn't so!' Another **Hamo** on this campus?" The Samoan students who are on college campuses are usually stereotyped as "being on the football team", or "the hula dancer for the Hawai'i Club". There is no wide-

spread knowledge of the fact that many Samoan and Pacific Islander students are making efforts to overcome their minimal representation by outreaching to their younger Polynesian brothers and sisters in the area.

Given that a normal age range for college students is 18 - 24, as of 1990, the number of Samoan students in that age bracket who enrolled in some form of college nation-wide is 29.7 percent, which is a few points below the national average of 34.4 percent (Carter and Wilson, 1997: 53). Specific statistics on Samoan students who have enrolled in California colleges has not been largely available. In any case, the data that is available reveals minimal representation of Pacific Islander students. For that matter, since Samoans and Hawaiians more than likely comprise the larger portion of that cluster, it is safe to contend that Samoan students are also minimally represented.

With the exception of a website with data for the students of California community colleges state-wide, the remaining websites, for Los Angeles County schools, the University of California, and California State University systems, do not disaggregate the Pacific Islander category into its main constituents, Samoans, Tongans, Hawaiians, Chamorros(Guamanians), and Fijians. In Hawai'i, Native Hawaiians in the University of Hawai'i's system are categorized separately from Pacific Islanders. In California, however, they are included within the Pacific Islander category. Since this study is based on the Samoan students within Los Angeles County colleges, I will focus more heavily on the California higher educational system regarding enrollment (1995 handout) or other statistical descriptions.

In the University of Hawai'i system, Pacific Islanders, again most of whom were either Samoan or **Chamorro**, comprised 1.8 percent of the students in 1993. Most of those student enrolled at the Manoa campus comprising 1.2 percent of the student body. Amongst Samoan community college students, most pursue vocational rather than

academic interests, and have been found to cease enrollment after the first semester for personal or financial reasons there (SEED, 1994: 7).

The California Higher Educational system is based on a master plan which categorizes higher education within the state as the University of California system, the California State University system, the Community College system, and private colleges (California Systems of Higher Education, 1996). Within the University of California system, in the Fall quarter of 1996, Pacific Islanders comprised 0.4 percent (488 students) of the undergraduate, and 0.2 percent (87 students) of the graduate student bodies system-wide (www.ucop.com, 1997). At UCLA, a UC college within Los Angeles County, the Fall quarter 1996 enrollment of Pacific Islanders (both undergraduates and graduates) was 105 or 0.3 percent of the total enrollment of students there (www.ucop.edu, 1997). Figures on which UC campus had the highest percentage of Pacific Islanders were not available (For ethnic group comparisons, see Appendix G, or page 114).

Within the entire California State University System, for the Fall semester 1996, 1,341 Pacific Islanders comprised 0.6 percent of the total enrollment of both graduate and undergraduate students (CSU Analytical Studies Reports, 1997). Within Los Angeles County, California State University Long Beach had the highest number of Pacific Islanders enrolled there, although they only comprised 0.5 percent of the student body (ibid: 1997).

Within the California Community College system statewide, the only system which disaggregated the Pacific Islander category into its ethnic constituents, 6,849 Pacific Islanders comprised 0.5 percent of the students in the community college system. Of these students, 691 or 0.05 percent were Samoan, 1,201 or 0.1 percent were Hawaiian, and 654 or 0.05 percent were **Chamorro** (www.cccco.edu, 1997).

Thus, the number of Pacific Islanders enrolled in higher education begins quite large with 6,849 students in the community college system, then descends with 1,341

students in the California State University System, and finally drops to a low of 575 students within the UC system. The table below summarizes Pacific Islander enrollment for California Public Schools, and systems of higher education. In any case, the percentages of Pacific Islander students in California colleges remain very minimal. Samoan students comprise only a fraction of this grouping, and are therefore, a very rare sight on campuses. In order to form Pacific Islander clubs, or to seek out other means of service, Samoan students face the challenge of finding others--like looking for needles in haystacks. To be an enrolled Samoan college student is to be one who has accepted, and overcame many adversities, indeed.

1996 Enrollment Figures for Pacific Islander Students		
Schooling Institution	Number Enrolled	Percent in respective system
Los Angeles County Public Schools[19]	7,484	0.5
Los Angeles Unified School District k-12[20]	2,492	0.4
Long Beach Unified School District k-12[21]	1,672	2.0
California Community College System[22]	6,849	0.5
California State University System[23]	1,341	0.6
University of California System[24]	575	0.3

Lack of Relevant Support Structures on College Campuses

Once in college, as one of the few Polynesian students, if there are others at all, Samoan students at times seek out something that might be specific to their needs, or interests. They look for assistance in how to finance their education, or to get counseling from someone who understands their culture, and their needs. When they look in directories or in websites, they might find that the closest thing available to them, specifically when they are on a mainland US college, is a Hawai'i club.

The Hawai'i clubs, comprised mostly of non-Pacific Islander student members, appear to exist in most mainland college campuses. However, these organizations do not address the needs of any Polynesian students which were discussed along the lines of the **Sulufa'iga**. The main attractions that characterize these clubs are social entertainment -- ski trips, picnics, and usually an annual glamorized,exaggerated, and exoticized forms of "**lu'au**"[25]. Rarely, if at all, do these organizations hold outreach conferences, conduct tutorials, or any form of intervention to address the issues Polynesian youth face, much less are they aware of these issues or problems.

The drop(kick) out rates of Samoan students are high compared to most ethnic groups, gang involvement amongst these students, the very limited economic resources within the Samoan community, and finally, the low representation in higher education, are issues that are pervasive. So far, only concerned college students, and community activists have been trying to tackle these issues on their own with little support. The few Samoan students who are enrolled in college seek help. They want counseling, not just any counselor, but someone who can relate to them. For that matter, the Samoan students who need financial assistance from someone who understands their challenges to meet the obligations to their families become disenchanted with the lack of anything relevent to their needs.

Achieving the Balance

The essence of **faaSamoa**, and the complexity of the roles each person must be responsible for does not disentigrate with the development of new generations of Samoan communities outside of Samoa. Samoan students are challenged as mentioned earlier, to meet demands of family while achieving in school. Some students take time off from college, or their latter years of high school to take care of a family situation, or respond to a **faalavelave**. **Faalavelave** refers to life-cycle events, the main ones of which are funerals or weddings. **Faalavelave** literally means "to tangle," "to make complicated"

(Va'a, 1997: 142). Students find that being called to contribute money to their parents to fly them to Samoa for a funeral, or for a **Sa'ofa'i**, the ceremony in which a **matai** title is bestowed upon someone, is a difference between academia and family they must reconcile.

Being students, they are even more financially burdened. Whether living away from home or not, they dig deep into their pockets to cover tuition, books, rent, bills, or other expenses, and to generally take care of the family. Often, Samoan students may not have much choice in taking time off from school for family obligations. **Faalavelave** contributions may be required on monthly bases, or all at once. Some Samoan students who live at home during their schooling many times will find that the responsibilities, **feau** will take priority over the time needed to complete homework assignments (SEED, 1994: 9). Regardless of whether they view family obligations as a help or a hindrance, some Samoan students will have to face the challenge to achieve the balance between family life and their academics.

The interviews will provide insights as to how the few Samoan college students overcame adversity, and challenge the stigma associated with being the only one, or a part of a marginalized group within the margins. The next chapter will add the voice to the experience of those who carry the essence of determination, persistence, and strength to beat the odds.

Endnotes

[1] Chen, P. 1973. Samoans in California. *Social Work*. 18/2: 45.

[2] Polynesia literally refers to "many islands."

[3] See Meleisea's(1987) *Lagaga: A Brief History of Western Samoa*, or George Turner's *Samoa: A Hundred Years Ago and Long Before*, for in-depth discussions on the origin of Samoa, and the story of **Tagaloa** whom Samoans were said to be descended from.

[4] **Tatau** is a skin design. The word "tattoo" mispronounced by European explorers more than likely came from this word.

[5] **Palagi** is a word which refers to a non-Samoan.

[6] I will refer to the Great Powers as the United States, France, Britain, and Germany.

[7] **Mau** means to steadfast. **Mau** movements occured in both American and Western Samoa against the changes colonial administrations imposed on them.

[8] This term is contextual. In most cases **aiga** refers to a family unit(s).

[9] Margaret Mead had this to say of Samoans and Samoan Society:

> For such studies, the anthropologist chooses quite simple peoples, primitive peoples, whose society has never attained the complexity of our own...A primitive people without a written language present a muchless elaborate problem, and a trained student can master the fundamental structure of a society in a few months...So, in order to investigate the particular problem, I chose not to go to Germany or to Russia, but to Samoa, (Mead, 1928: 14-15).

This quote was found in an article by Gaugau Va'afuti Tavana, 1997, from the *International Journal of Educational Reform*. 6/1: 11.

[10] **Fita** **Fita** are the guards who were maintaining security of the base.

[11] The maps in the appendix section are arranged alphabetically. The maps for entire states and one for the entire U.S. includes the population distribution of Samoans amongst the ethnic groups counted in the respective counties according to 1990 Census data. The maps for Counties like Los Angeles, San Diego, etc. contain the population distribution of Samoans amongst the ethnic groups in the respective Census tracts for that county also with respect to the 1990 Census data. Please refer to any of these maps to visualize the distribution of Samoans in the states and in the counties which seem to provide a target for the growth of Samoan communities.

[12] **Faalavelave** literally means "to tangle" or "to complicate" More generally, these are situations Samoan students may more than likely need to immediately respond to.

[13] The jury in this case deadlocked. Skiles was acquitted and the Tualaulelei family was unable to appeal the case. Refer to Daunt, T. and J. Meyer. 1997, May 6, Sherriff's Department Loses $23million Dollar Appeal. *Los Angeles Times*, and My Daddy Knelt...1991, March 16. *Los Angeles Times* Editorial.

[14] This observation is from my own participation in youth outreach visits to Los Angeles County High schools such as Long Beach Polytechnic, Carson High, Banning, and Narbonne where there are lots of Samoan students.

[15] The term "at-risk" is contextual. The Principal of Carson High School defined a student who is at-risk a one who has failed a course two or more times. In this study, it will be used to refer to a condition of need for service or intervention.

[16] I will use the term kickout or expulsion as a more appropriate reference to the conditions of schooling, lack of support or understandings from teachers which forces Samoan students out of school.

[17] **Sulufa'iga** refers to a sanctuary, a place of enlightenment or shelter, according to one of the students I interviewed. This task force report was constructed at the University of Hawai'i and presented at a conference sponsored by the *Samoa International* Newspaper in Honolulu.

[18] These items were adopted from the **Sulufa'iga** task force report. SEED, 1994.

[19] www.cde.ca.gov

[20] www.lacoe.edu

[21] www.cde.ca.gov

[22] www.cccco.edu

[23] www.calstate.edu

[24] www.ucop.edu

[25] A **lu'au** is a traditional Hawaiian ceremony which is not to be confused with the commercialized **lu'au** the tourist industry advertises. There are distinct sacred roles for men and women and the ranks within the Hawaiian social structure, such as traditional **hula** (a sacred dance and basis for Hawaiian culture). The **lu'au** as we see it today has been bastardized: transformed into exaggerated, romanticized forms of hula dancing parties by so called Hawaiian clubs on mainland college campuses.

CHAPTER THREE:

Student Narratives

A culmination of interviews with nine Samoan college students generated the body of this chapter. There are three general areas of concern each of which this chapter will discuss through the voices of Samoan college students. The first points of concern pertain to their perceptions of the obstacles: what Samoan students perceive as barriers or challenges to their education at various points in time before, and during their college years. Specifically, within that context, this chapter will pay particular attention to what they see as barriers within, and external to their communities as they relate to their access to, and retention in higher education.

Secondly, and of increasing significance, the focus of the discussion will move towards how these students coped with, or continue to cope with what they perceived as obstacles. More specifically, discussions will address the question regarding what structural means of support-community organizations, educational staff and/or resources, immediate or extended family, etc., they have been able to rely on. Was there any support at all, or does their ability to overcome or cope come from their own personal strengths within? How do they critique these existing structures? What alternate approaches or recommendations do they offer? Here, the main areas of concern will fall upon those particular questions.

Finally, and perhaps most offering, as a closing sequence to this chapter, discussion topics will flow into a more imaginative sense as they expose the students' ideas on the kinds of programs, or interventions that could be created to prepare more Samoan students for an education beyond high school, and their own perceptions of what can help increase the recruitment and retention of Samoan college students. Within this part of the discussion, the students construct their own notions of ideal interventions, and what they foresee as the resulting situational contexts. The aim in this closing section is to expose the

remedies that Samoan students believe are solutions that would serve as a catalyst to increase the overall access and retention for Samoan students in a post high school educational setting.

In essence, the crux of this chapter is to peer deeper into the higher educational experience through the lenses of Samoan college students. Furthermore, and on a grander scale, the purpose of this chapter is to generate[1] ideas which may formulate, or construct a basis for educational intervention, or other approaches which seek to maximize the opportunities for access to higher education for Samoan students.

Obstacles to Higher Education

Negligible Representation of Samoan or Pacific Islander Staff/Faculty

A general concern amongst Samoan college students was their perception of a pre-college obstacle for many Samoan students at elementary and secondary school levels--the lack of Samoan or Pacific Islander American teachers. At schools like Carson High School, Long Beach Polytechnic, or Jordan where the Samoan/Pacific Islander student populations are higher, many Samoan students are falling into a pattern of school failure. The high kickout rates discussed in the previous chapter is pervasive; Samoan students feel alienated in school in every city. Most of the respondents believed that overall at these schools, there was a great need for more Samoan or Pacific Islander American teachers who understand their issues and their needs. In essence, some students believed that the ethnic composition of teaching faculty should reflect the ethnic composition of the students. They felt that teachers with these qualities could provide a better educational context at schools with significant numbers of Samoan students. More specifically, they felt they would have been more encouraged, or motivated had they the opportunity to take classes from Samoan/Pacific Islander faculty.

> There are none (Samoan teachers at Jordan High School). In fact, in the Long Beach Unified School District, when there's a problem with a Samoan student, my

cousin, who works for Long Beach Unified at the Main Office, is called to go to that campus. One person cannot handle seven schools of Samoan students(D6: 2).

I think that anytime you have someone from your background, and can relate to what you go through, obviously that person's gonna be a better motivator for you because they came from where you're from, and they know what's up (D8: 1).

I don't think there are a lot of good high school counselors out there that are getting the kids the right information on what they need to take. Especially with a lot of Samoan kids (D3: 9).

Teacher Misunderstandings of Samoan Students

In some instances, students see how the dominant educational system which in the United States calls for the free expression of ideas, and questions creates a setting which alienates some Samoan students who were taught that these types of expressions are forbidden, and are required to demonstrate respect for authority without question, or disagreement.

I mean our culture **faaSamoa** is based on more or less respect and obedience, and growing up, as far as in the classroom, you're taught to sit down, shut up, and listen. It's good for the teacher because then they're gonna do their job. But it's bad for the student because that's all they're going to do is just sit there and be quiet. And if you're going to sit there in a classroom in a high school out here, and you have a bunch of students from Samoa and a bunch of students from out here, you'll probably know which ones are from Samoa because they're going to be the most quiet. Other than that Samoan culture, the parents place such high expectations on their kids, and what to expect from their kids. That may inspire someone to finish college, but other than that, sometimes the expectations are too high. (D4: 2, emphasis added)..

Internal Hatred, Words that Wound[2] and Other Challenges

Just as sticks and stones break bones, derogatory stereotypes and assaultive speech *does indeed* break one's soul. Racial stereotypes affect the outcome of a student's educational plans, as well as, their course of life.

I handed a student a note telling her what the teacher just had asked us to do. So I gave her the note, and this teacher blatantly come out and says, "Why don't you people go back to where you come from?"(D6: 3)

One student discussed how she observed a general type of vibe or assumption from others including her Samoan peers, and even to a certain extent, her own relatives that

college is not attainable. Others perceived that college was for other people, not Samoan youth. In a general sense, there is a false image about an inability amongst Samoan youth to be educated, and articulate that both must be overcome within and external to the Samoan community.

> They (some of my relatives) didn't expect me to go on (to college). They'd be like, 'So where are you gonna work at?' They didn't ask me where I was going to go to school. They would start asking me,'So where am I gonna work at ?' (The obstacle for me to deal with was) just overcoming the stereotype that we couldn't get to college and that once we were there, we were going to flunk out. We weren't going to survive (D8: 2, emphasis added).

She later asserted how she deals with the vibes and the words that wound.

> I'm still in the stages of overcoming it(the stereotypes). I think the only way I'll ever overcome that is the day I graduate, the day I have a degree in my hand, cause then, you know, I've proven to them that no matter what they've thrown at me, I took it all in and I still graduated. I keep on going(D8: 2, emphasis added).

Another student, who is now teaching elementary school, reflects upon his detection of an offensive vibe from some people, particularly his own colleagues. Ironically, his colleagues are surprised when they interact with him because of his intellectual, and professional manner which they perceive as uncommon for a Samoan.

> I think that definitely teachers and administrators after years of dealing with Samoan students with in terms of seeing them as discipline problems and troublemakers, maybe internalize some types of stereotypes about Samoan students. ...I can tell you about my own personal experiences. Just in general, teachers and other students, non-Samoan students maybe kind of being surprised at my academic success while I was going through high school--junior high school and high school here. And Samoans themselves would stereotype Samoans and were pretty surprised at my being academically successful (D7: 1-2).

Others observed challenges amongst Samoan youth at high schools with larger, more significant numbers of Samoan students. They generally perceived that at these schools there is a tremendous trend of peer pressure, and an attitude amongst Samoan youth that creates a hurdle to clear to their access to higher education. Although this study seeks to avoid deficit-explanations for problems, their observation is a perceived reality amongst Samoan youth at these high schools--a peer pressure to conform to what most

Samoan students were doing, or face being called "school girl" or "nerd" or more generally speaking, **fiapalagi**, "wanna be white."

> I got that(people calling me **fiapalagi**) as soon as I reached the ninth grade. If you rolled up in a nice car and if you even looked part-**afakasi**, or whatever, you were considered **fiapalagi**. And at xxxx it was really difficult, because I grew up in a predominantly Mormon attribute ...and because I was the only Protestant who went there, I was already outcasted there. and then when it came to my academics and my studies, they(other Samoan) would always say, 'there goes goody two-shoes. I started a mentoring program at my high school for Samoan kids. They'd listen to me, and yet they'd follow what their mind and what the peer pressure from the outide dictated. There goes miss doesn't do anything wrong. I was always outcasted. I think it was mainly because of the religion/my academic role in school(D6: 1-2)

Disappointments in College: Lack of Student Support Networks

Once in college, many Samoan students may look forward to finding out about campus organizations, or activities that relate to their needs. While many Samoan students who have made it into college similarly seek out other Polynesian student organizations, they are frustrated to find that the ones which are geared for mere social entertainment through romanticized versions of Hawaiian dancing, are the only ones widely available.

A student recalls attending a fund-raiser for one of these types campus organizations at his school.

> They're trying to. It's like a pose off. I saw this thing,and I don't want to get on what's that group at xxxxxx. I went to one **Lu'au**, man. It was so cool. Then all of a sudden the guys came on, and it was a whole flex thing. All you can hear was wooo!!!!...It's all fake. Flexing and trying to be the baddest. It was basically...it was ugly(D7: 12).

In essence, the agenda of these campus organizations were irrelevant to the needs of Samoan, and other Pacific Islander youth who have found that there are greater, more immediate needs to be addressed within their communities that these so-called Hawaiian clubs could not satisfy.

Marginalized within the Margins -- Minimal Representation in College

A lot of students felt alienated within movements of other students of color who vye for similar causes related to their educational challenges to gain greater voice and representation in colleges.

> Definitely (there was a lack of outreach). We get lumped together with other minority groups (I'm talking about African Americans, Asian Americans, Chicanos) and we end up forwarding the issues of more vocal minority groups intead of concentrating on what our problems are. PISA tried to fix that, but there's only so much that eight of us can do (D1: 2).

> When I was in high school the only reason I found out about scholarships, or financial aid was because I did my own footwork. I did my own research. I didn't have the luxury schools have now with our club here at xxxxxxxx, with the high school conferences. I didn't have that. I had to go to the Latino Conferences. I had to go to the Black Student Union conferences. I had to come, even to the fraternities and sororities. I had to come to their stuff because there was no conference. Just to find out what was available to me...there was no one else I could go to but these options, and it's not really comforting to know that I was the only Samoan student or Pacific Islander student at the Latino conferences. There was a lack of support. Because I had none. I had to do my own.
> It wasn't until I stumbled across financial aid papers(D6: 2).

The Athletic Dream and the Athletic Reality

Some students who were former student-athletes provided a unique perspective on what creates challenges for them in addition to being regularly matriculated students. Amidst decisions on whether to drop their schooling to turn professional, or to continue on while trying to balance out practice time with schoolwork, the Samoan student-athlete faces very different pressures from other students.

A former football star explains his most difficult challenge to staying in school.

> My biggest challenge to staying in was going to class. I think the biggest problem is that as an athlete, the expectation of being able to play, I guess once you put in the role as a sub or non-starting position, especially when you come from a background where you're used to that type of playing time like myself. I think that was the biggest discouragement on my part, was having to play second best. You know it kind of discouraged me from actually being in school, and the reason for being in school. And I lost interest in going to class and the only thing I wanted to do was go to practice. You know, and that was the biggest challenge I faced was staying in college.... the problem with that time too is that if you're a football player, the biggest thing is that everything is practically done for you by the athletic department. You don't have to worry about grades because they find a way to get

you into a class. Because there are certain classes that'll get you to pass just to be eligible. I think for me it was a disappointment on my family that had looked to me as being the first one in the family to go to college after such a great year in high school, but even more was the fact that I accepted my pains. I think that's the biggest problem with Samoans right now. Academically they don't want to admit the failures that they have. Another thing is that Samoans don't like to talk about their failures academically one on one basis to their parents or to anybody else. I think they generally shy away from that or give false hopes to other people or maybe relatives(D9: 3-4).

Another student observed how many Samoan youth who are tempted into athletics with dreams of playing professional ball become disenchanted upon realizing how narrow the opportunity is to achieve that status.

I think it's what I've seen in Samoan kids out here is. They have a Samoan word called **fiafiapuupuu**. **Fiafia** means liking something and **puupuu** means short. Means they like something for a short while. They'll get into something, and not finish it. I think it's a common in a lot of Samoan students. That word. You'll find that in a lot of Samoan students. You know, once the high of something, once it's gone, they go, 'ah, I, dont' wanna do that.' then they just drop it. And to me, I see it in Samoan churches, I see it in any Samoan organization. They don't have the dedication to stick with it all the way. I hear a lot of people talking about Samoan football players. There's so many good Samoan high school football players. A bunch of them, good in high school, they all go to college, next thing you know... it gets less. By the time college years are over, and it comes time for the NFL draft, you only have your Jesse Sapolu, your Manu Tuiasosopo and to me it's because of that lack of dedication. And I always use people like Jesse Sapolu (as an example) because they've had long careers in the NFL. A lot of these Samoan kids say, 'I wanna play football.' And I tell them straight out, I say, 'Hey unless you're Jesse Sapolu, Manu Tuiasosopo, or Junior Seau in football, all you're gonna get are broken bones. Do something with your life. Football isn't for everybody. No matter how good a ball player you are. There are a hundred other Samoan kids saying the same thing and maybe just one of them will probably end up in the NFL. And I use that term generously, and personally I love using that word...**Fiafiapuupuu**. They see a challenge. They run into, I guess obstacles, and then they'll turn and just go the other way(D4: 2).

Another student and former football athlete reflected upon the same situation amongst Samoan youth in his critique of Carson High School students, and discussion of barriers that Samoan youth in general face. They cite a temptation by the world of professional athletics to Samoan young men -- how this temptation blinds them into forgetting about the importance of academics, and sets them on a dream of playing

professional ball. He explains not only his general perception of Samoan young men, but also reflects upon his own personal struggle with this image.

> For now, the problem now with kids..I'm going to use Carson for example. Their only interest is just to play football. They only see it as like a thing to do. They have no idea what's beyond football. They have no discipline. There's a breakdown in the family because the family's provide the pressure to work and provide for the family. the family bond is now not as strong as it used to be. You know what my biggest thing was and this is probably the biggest thing too and it's probably occuring now amongst the Samoan kids. It is that I'm talking from an athlete's standpoint is that football is so much engrained in Samoans because a lot of role models that make it to the pros and they forget like myself about the academic part. ..that grades don't become effective to them until they realize that, you know, like me my problem was I had such a great high school football time. Then I got big-headed and then at the summer when I graduated I gave a verbal committment to Arizona State. Through out the whole summer before training camp opened, I was wondering why they never contacted me. But I contacted them only to tell me that I didn't have no grades and that was kind of like, wow, the biggest disappointment of my life, and then when I reflect upon that, I'd say, 'Yeah, I think that is one of the problems that they--Samoan kids get too caught up with playing football, and wanting to get to the professional level. But they don't look what's in between the professional level and high school, and that's the academic part because you know there's so much talent. But they think they're going to make it on muscle alone into any college. And usually it's the kids that don't participate in athletics--Samoan kids--are usually the ones that end up academically going to college(D9: 3).

Even athletes who are on scholarship do not have the life in college that they expected.

> Well, you don't receive any money as an athletic scholarship. Money comes from your family. Free meals, free housing, free tuition. Books are paid for. The only things you have to pay for is laundry soap and the necessities. They don't give you anything(else), and that is the reason a lot of these players are taking money from agents because of things like that. How can you expect an athlete to act like a regular student if he's walking around campus without any money, or take a girlfriend to a movie ifyou have no money? (D3: 4)

Challenges Amongst Samoan Youth:

Gangs

There is also the reality of gang involvement amongst Samoan youth. Samoan students identified this phenomenon not as an anomaly to the Samoan community, but as another perceived challenge to higher education for Samoan youth. This is another decision that Samoan youth encounter that will affect their educational future.

> I think out of the minority groups, I'm talking about minority in a minority, like take any Asian group, if you get down to it, I think Samoans have the highest rate of gang involvement third to Blacks and Mexicans(D8: 6).

> I think that lately I've just begun to understand the whole gang thing. For a long time I felt, well, all gangsters, they're just losers who would rather have a good time than just working hard to secure their future. So they were using their gangs or their gang life as a way out. I don't think I've gone the end of the spectrum or the extreme, but I think I'm more understanding of these factors that sometimes by joining in a gang, being a part of a gang is obviously is a hindrance to your academic success. But then being a part of a gang is part of a stereotype that a lot of Samoan youth buy into(D7: 2).

> Peer pressure has a lot to do with it. I mean you have a lot of Samoan kids who are followers. There's always one of that whole bunch who always wants to lead. But if that's the wrong person to lead, the example, as far as leading others are not going to be as good as someone who's looking out for the benefit of everybody(D3: 1).

The image of gangs conjures threatening, menacing icons, and fear. The Samoan community is not exempt from issues concerning gang activity and violence. Ironically, one student reflected on how many Samoan youth tend to initiate their membership into such gangs as a response to the sense of defenselessness they feel against the violence within and external to their community.

> Also now, I can see where Samoan youngsters join gangs because they feel that it's a way for their to protect themselves from just living in this kind of community where violence is pretty rampant. Maybe it's a defensive response. Not to police, but to other gangs. There's tensions between Carson Samoans and Long Beach Samoans. There's also tensions between Samoans and Mexicans. I've heard stories of Mexican gangs tattooing "Samoan killer" on their bodies and hitting up on the walls. Even myself, to be honest with you, when I hear something like that, it gets me thinking about, 'wow, what's going on? I'd better watch my back.' As soon as I start thinking that way, then I understand the need why some of these guys might want to join the gang. It's for protection. I don't necessarily agree that joining a gang is the answer, but it's obviously an alternative, and it's a reality. And it's definitely a barrier. Once you start joining a gang, academics is not even a possibility(D7: 2).

Academic Failure

As with Samoan athletes, another area where Samoan students perceived obstacles to higher education was in the realm of academic performance. Some students perceive the obstacles within the Samoan community which result of a lack of programs that can help

monitor the performance of, and prepare students for a post high school education, or education at any level in general. Access to higher education depends on students successfully passing courses, and meeting the required standards. There is a perception that the academic performance of many Samoan students in general has fallen short of these standards.

> Academic status, I believe. A lot of kids think that if they don't have the grade point average, there's no chance they can get into any college(D6: 1).

> I'd have to say it would be the academics. You know mostly, they just don't have the grades to get in and the academic background to get in. Oh it starts earlier on, and that's based on my own experience.(D7: 1).

Lack of Services to Prepare Samoan Youth for College

Although the respondents were able to identify some programs which were available to help Samoan students, they were also quick to provide a critique of their weak points. There is a general desire amongst the respondents for a greater variety of intervention options, and an increased level of effectiveness to characterize these programs.

Many American Samoan students end up going to the US Mainland their post-high school years. A student pointed out that there were few resources available for Samoan students at his high school in American Samoa to prepare them for schooling in the mainland United States.

> When I was in Samoa, they didn't have very many college prep programs. The closest thing we had to that was the National Honor Society. I was in the National Honor Society. Other than that, they didn't have Upward Bound at the time, or any programs within each high school labeling, like out here they would have classes which were for advanced students only. Now they do(have certain types of (intervention programs). That's still one of the things I would like to get into when I go back home is to prepare programs for students that are willing to come out here. Another thing is they don't have a program to prepare them for culture shock. That's the worst. That's what I went through, and I know that's what a lot of Samoan students are going through(D4: 1, emphasis added).

Financial Obstacles to School

One of the primary obstacles that, whether from American or Western Samoa, or the States, every Samoan student I interviewed identified was the economic barrier to

higher education. The rising costs of tuition make accessing and sticking out college difficult for all students. However, some students have a harder time than others. Most of the students felt that there was no dissemination of any materials or literature which might have prepared them for the financial obstacles they were about to face in college.

> Economic needs. I would, as far as preparing students for college, they don't have programs to advise students on the financial help that's available aside from the regular government scholarships. They don't have workshops. I don't think they have any at least when I was there. They have workshops to tell people about financial aid, loan programs and stuff like that(D4: 1).

> I think the other obstacle is money. They don't know the resources of financial aid, and they don't know the government can help them out with tuition. I think there was a big financial problem. I know a lot of our parents who brought us here and who came here didn't have the greatest jobs in the world(D3: 2)

Faalavelave: Family Obligations, Life-Cycle Events

The clashes between the **palagi** world of academia and the **faaSamoa** is exemplified in this discussion of the existence and significance of **faalavelave**. Hiding behind the financial challenge is the given participation in **faalavelave** for most Samoan students. Most of the Samoan students have a special kinship responsibility to parents and certain designated family members as some are usually obligated to contribute large chunks of money, or time immediately upon request to a **faalavelave**, or life cycle event. Although some students view this process as a barrier, others view it as a way to maintain a strong tie to one's family based on a cyclical principle that a favor that is given is returned in some other way when needed.

> I know a lot of people, they bitch---when is it going to come back to me? When I was a kid I used to complain, well why do we have to give, give that for **faalavelave**? and their answer to me was, because when you have a **faalavelave**, those same people that you gave to are going to be the same ones that are going to give to you which makes it clarified for me. I give in, my son decides to get married. ok all those people I helped out, they're more or less gonna give into his wedding. That's how the **faaSamoa** in a way is pretty good, but they don't see education as a **faalavelave**. They need to work on that(D4: 5).

Much to contrary of the "simple" view of Polynesian societal structure, there is a hierarchy of relationships involved which determines the amount of money or time that

should be contributed to a certain person's cause for the **faalavelave**. The discussion continued, and provided a more clear context for a greater understanding of the process associated with the **faalavalave**. A student explains the significance, and complex structural organization of the **faalavelave(s)**, as well as how significant this responsibility is to some Samoan students.

> Sometimes, most of the times they don't tell you outright. It depends on how closely related you are to the person having the **faalavelave**. First cousin, uncle, Dad's first cousin...that's considered close. Then you have what they call **paolo(s)**. People you are related to but not directly. **Paolo**. You use that word, when you get into **faalavelave(s)**, they use the word **paolo magafa**. **Gafa** is your roots. **Paolo** is people you are more or less related to. The closer they are related to, the more direct it will be. But the farther they are from your family tree..they won't directly....it depends on the high chief. When there's a **faalavelave**, the high chief will call on members of the family and say, 'we've got a **faalavelave** going on. We're gonna have a talk. So all the family members come together and talk at his house and say ok, such and such is going on, a wedding's going on this is how much each person is going to give. How much monetarily, and how many **'ie toga(s)**, and then you have your distant relatives where, oh they're having a **faalavelave**, oh we'll just take something over there. But in a way, you're still giving something. Depends on how closely related. mainly, the main ones are weddings, funerals, and then you have your church **faalavelave(s)**...church conferences, our church is visiting another church because of a funeral. So you have your weddings within the church, funerals within the church, and then one of the biggest **faalavelave(s)**, which would be the **sa'ofa'i.** That's when they celebrate a chief...someone taking a chiefly title. **Sa'ofa'i** actually means sitting...where you sit in front of a village and let them know who's a the high chief...and that requires a lot of input--as far as the family members are concerned. Especially if it's your dad that's having a **sa'ofa'i**, or your dad's brother, or mom's brother, or someone you're directly related to (D4: 5-7).

Overcoming Barriers

This section will explore the means the students believed they used to overcoming the adversity of being one of the few, or the only Samoan student on the campus they attend. If relevant at all, this section will look try to look at the structural means of support if available that Samoan students have utilized to cope with challenges mentioned in the primary section of this chapter.

Structural Support: Tools to Overcome

While the students identified a wide range of obstacles, particularly, in most cases, a lack of existing resources geared to help Samoan/Pacific Islander youth, the students were able to identify the few organizational structures, and networks that are in place. However, they were not able to recall how these structures---community organizations, programs, personally assisted them in their schooling efforts.

They were also quick to offer a critique of these organizations.

> There's Eni Hunkin, the Congressman. His office has a staff that works with education, the needs of Samoans. Primarily their focus is to help them obtain information to help them get financial aid and they also have an undergrad intern program. Then you've got the Office of Samoan Affairs but I don't think their role is ....I don't really understand what their purpose is because what they do is refer them to somebody else that you already know about. Samoan Affairs doesn't really do any good. Now you have a Department of Education in American Samoa, but the problem with that is that most of their financial funding is only specifically for Samoans that are coming from the islands to school here(D9: 1-2).

Only one of the interviewees was aware of a program within the Los Angeles Unified School District that was designed to help Samoan students develop job skills. Of the programs that are available to help Samoan and Pacific Islander students, information about these programs are not readily available or distributed to the point where most Samoan students are aware of them. This student has also provided a critique of this program and its effectiveness.

> They got this organization called PIC (Private Industry Council). It's a combined city effort by Torrance, Lomita, Wilmington, and Carson. But a group here in Carson, they have this program called STEP. It's the Samoan Training and Employment Program here only for Samoans. They offer job opportunities for kids in the summer. Unless if a Samoan kid, the only way they find out is by word of mouth from somebody that works in PIC or unless they go in there and they actually see the fliers. But they don't know nothing about STEP that it exists. This is high school. STEP is offered for Samoan kids in general (D9: 1).

While he was quick to offer his critique of the weaknesses of the program....

> My daughter and son were in that program. It's just for summer employment with those kids, but the problem with that is that it's coordinated with the LA Unified School District. But the LA Unified schools, they don't monitor the progress of the Samoan kid. Some of the problems my daughter had is that she wants to work

with friends, people who are her buddies. But she doesn't realize that it's a chance to learn job skills. That's a problem with the kids that got into the program. It was that Samoan kids are real tempermental. The only authority they respect is the authority of their parents. But outside of that, at work, especially at the workplace, they didn't give a damn. If they felt they were being pressured, they'd just quit. Now it's a problem with kids in this program not all but a few examples. Yeah (the instructors were Samoan) but see even the STEP program wasn't closely monitored because what they'd do is get the names and release the records. They would keep the records as track records of employment. All they'd see is that students would move from one job to another all in that one summer, but it would make STEP look bad. That was the problem with STEP was that they don't monitor the progression of kids working and how well they were doing (D9: 1-2).

He also provided suggestions on what he thought would make STEP more effective in teaching job skills while at the same time providing an income for students.

I think it would have helped the program if they had something like in-counseling, evaluating the kid's progress rather than depend on where they can say, 'Oh I'll quit. I'll go back and get another job.' They shouldn't do that. If they had somebody there that'll monitor their work and how well they're doing at it work and if they can't work, then don't give 'em another job because they're just spoiling them. Have 'em get used to that where they'll do it over again it doesn't do 'em no good. They're not learning anything, and it wasn't toward the end of the summer that she got involved with this program they got at Harbor College. This computer training class where they gave her some skills at Computer Science when she can get into. I guess they have to have an interest in the job-training or employment before that I can see that they'll actually stick with it, but at some...thing like stocking, or working at the mall...I think that doesn't serve 'em no interest. There are too many distractions over there, and they're not used to that kind of supervision. You know people, supervisors that are not experienced, even experienced working with high school kids, especially Samoan kids. Because they don't have any background experience with PI's where they come from(D9: 1-2).

Response to a Lack of Relevant Student Support Structures

Many Samoan, and other Pacific American students respond to the lack of relevant support structures by forming their own, on a student-run level. Pacific Islander student groups are the coalition of Pan-Pacific students. That is, the diverse constituents of Hawaiian, Samoan, or Tongan students come together to address the issues in their communities.

Well the thing I did was I turned it along with the group, XXXX, we did some massive outreach into the Pacific Island community. That was therapeutic in getting it off of our chests. Everybody was doing it out of necessity, out of their desire to be a part of it. Like I said before, we identified with each other, in like there was only eight or nine of us on the campus on one time. I figure a Samoan, they know

> how bad it feels, so everybody was working together to try to remedy that. It was a passion, it wouldn't have been able to be pulled off if it was anything else. We don't get paid. We were missing school. I was missing work. You couldn't do that just because your homeys was doing it. You had to really care about it (D1: 3).

Overcoming Cultural Deficit

These students on the other hand, maintained a strong sense of pride and connection to 'their **faaSamoa**' their perception of life. In essence, they performed a balancing act: handling the rigors of academia, while securing the bonds between themselves and their families.

Maintaining Family Honor through Cultural Influences: Family Role Model

Much to the contrary of the deficit model of thought, Samoan students attribute aspects of their upbringing, the role of their parents, and the influence of **faaSamoa** as a means of explaining part of their success in school in the midst of an educational context without, or with very few Samoan teachers and staff present.

One student explained how her mother who dropped out of high school to help her family, was her main role model and motivator to do well through her college years. This student recently was awarded a scholarship from a local Pacific American community organization. She credits her mother for instilling a work ethic in her which also helped her to achieve high honors on a scholastic level.

> My mother was probably the central figure, a model of success to me. The thing that made me look up to my mom was that her education was very limited, and yet when she came here, she worked hard. She has a good job. To me that rang in my heart because my mom, she struggled because the reason she dropped out of school was to help my family. Again we're going back to the same pattern, and even though she didn't finish, she still worked hard, and got a good job. She sees that but she wants better for me. She wants me to do all things she couldn't. It's her work ethic. ...she motivated me to stay in college because she wants me to get a good job. She doesn't want me to be dependent upon anybody but myself. and that goes back to her own work ethic. I pretty much want the same for myself(D8: 3).

In most cases, for students who were from, or whose parents were from American or Western Samoa, the primary reason for the decision to move to the United States was

educationally based. This student mentioned how his family came from the village of **Utulei**, American Samoa to the United States for the sake of better educational opportunities their parents wanted them to have.

> Basically, that was the reason for us coming here to America. That was the reason for us coming to California was to better our education. My Mom and Dad debated whether to take us to Western Samoa, or whether to bring us here for our education. They decided to bring us here for our education(D3: 1).

Another student discussed how his father was the biggest influence, and motivating factor in his decision to return to college after over five years of working full-time and serving in the military. He recently finished his required coursework for his senior year.

> My father ...my dad graduated . When he graduated from Long Beach State. I was just in junior high school, and when I think about it, I say, 'Wow, my dad is not your average college-aged student.' Just like me, he was always, to me he was always that type that would want to learn more and more. I never really realized that until I got into the military. And then when I got in the military, I seriously considered hopefully some way to come back and finish my schooling, because of my dad and what he had done. I figure if anything I would like to at least as a minimum finish college (D9: 7).

One student who was teased by other Samoan students because she was perceived nonconforming to the norm of what they thought a Samoan should be, discussed how her knowledge of the Samoan language, and **faaSamoa** helped her to cope with the pressure from other Samoan students who questioned her Samoan identity.

> In my senior year, I finally was accepted as a Samoan because I spoke better Samoan than everybody else. I spoke Samoan more frequent than some other kids who just came from Samoa(D6: 1).

Similarly, another student reflected on how her parents want her and her siblings to have a college degree. To them the inability to finish school is dishonorable. The pressure on the members of her family to succeed in school is embodied deep within the roots of the family structure.

> I think that's (parent's expectations) one of the greatest pressures. I think it's that. I really hate to say this but a lot of it is also because they want their kids to be successful, but I think it's for some reason I just feel like if their kid doesn't finish school, it brings a disgrace upon the family, and that's a lot of pressure on the student also(D5: 1).

When I think about going back home. Going back home without a degree, it's like you'll do worse than you did out here. Right now, people in Samoa look high on a Samoan with a degree(D4: 1).

For other students, much to the contrary of cultural deficit arguments, the strict discipline and rules of **faaSamoa** taught Samoan students to respect authority--parents, and teachers. For some students, the fear of the actions their parents might take if she did not prepare for college, was a major factor that pushed them to achieve academically. In many cases, the decisions of some students revolved around what their parents believed would ensure their children's academic success.

Very much so (there was a lot of pressure from my parents to succeed in school) Especially from my father. My dad was really hardcore pro-education, and my mom was, she always pushed us to do better in school. Oh, definitely (they checked our report cards all the time), and for me personally,...they had high expectations of me, and I guess of my brothers as well. If we came home with average grades, they (my parents) would really get on our case, and really wonder why are we pulling C's in our classes and may be we're not trying hard enough. And then they'd say 'you'd better change your work habits and things you do,.less playing around, and more studying, less watching tv. stuff like that. They really came down hard on us(D2: 1, emphasis added).

Within my family education was number one when it came to my brothers and sisters, and when it came to my mom and dad. When my sisters were growing up. My sisters were about 8 to 10 years older than me. When they were growing up, it was wake up in the morning, eat breakfast, go to school, come home, do homework, and go to sleep. That was the routine. No one was allowed to drop below a 3.5, and this is boys and girls. Everybody was expected to graduate high school. My parents knew when my report card was coming in. My parents knew when a project was due. And when me and my brother were growing up, there was even more so very difficult, but my brother and I had leeeway. They were more, as we were growing up in high school, we had a little bit more freedom. My sisters weren't allowed to join clubs, they weren't allowed to play volleyball, they weren't allowed to play any sports. They weren't allowed to play in the band. When my brother and I grew up, we played in the volleyball team and I was in the Pacific Islander Club on campus. I was actually a dance teacher in high school for the Islander's club. So we got a lot more leeway, but we were also expected to do much better than my sisters(D6: 6-7).

This isn't really as much support as much as it was a push to get into college. My parents were very, very strict about me getting into college. Because they had higher education, and they knew, they were like, they didn't fool around. I can relate personally, because I wanted to play football, because,....oh man, everybody was playing football. All my friends, all the other Samoans were playing football. And I wanted to play football, and play football one year. I went out for the

football team. Then we got our progress reports five weeks after school started. I got all Bs on my progress report, and this was just a progress report. It was not even a report card. My dad made me quit the team the next day right after I got my progress report. I was really sad, and I was really angry, but what could I do? That's how he prioritized things for me. He just said look, football's not going to take you anywhere. Well, actually...basically he just said, your academics are what are going to take you somewhere, and because I think my parents came to this country because they knew that the schools were better. We had a better opportunity to get an education so they really pushed the kids(D7: 3-4).

In most cases, however, the students believed that parental educational expectations amongst siblings varies depending on which person they believe has the most potential to succeed.

I think what I've seen is that parents kind of get a beat early, or cue early on with their kid's academic careers--whether or not they're going to succeed. and when kids really do well in elementary school, and keep doing well in junior high school, I think Samoan parents will then push their kids because they see that they can do well. I've seen examples of where you have indifferent families where one of them is doing well, so they, parents really push that one kid, and everybody else is kind of,... they're not too strong...they're not too good, so they don't push those kids as much. And so you have a lot of families, I see families where there's this, that one kid went to college and graduated and is doing well....and everybody else is kind of like, they have different expectations of them, and I think that's mainly because they didn't start off too..well. Which is unfortunate because a lot of them still should be in(D7: 4).

I think. Samoan parents would look at how their kids are, and depending on how the kid behaves, they'll say, 'yeah, you're better off staying home and doing the **aumaga**.' You know, somebody else is more studious, 'yeah, you go to school.' I've seen families like that where whoever's the smarter one, or whoever they think is the smarter one, they would more or less determine 'ok you're going to college, and whoever isn't, you stay home and take care of the family.' Which works out alright, but other than that I think it's unfair. Like I said, Samoan kids are more or less apt to obey to whatever they're told. They never....they hardly ever question authority(D4: 4).

Some students credit the assistance of their parents in helping them to prepare for college.

They didn't check my homework, ..my spelling, and those kinds of things. But they provided a space for me to do my work. But I always had a room--I had to share,...but I had a room with a desk. They bought me a computer when I was in the eleventh grade. Now computers are just a comon place. But we had a computer back in ...ten years ago. That was..not common. I remember when I was a senior in high school, and I was taking calculus at 7 in the morning. I always would wake up my dad to take me to school...and there was no question, this was something I needed--to go to college(D7: 8)

For most students, their vision of being in college was already a personal given expectation of themselves, even at times, with very little support from anyone else.

> I didn't have other brothers and sisters, I didn't have parents who had been there (to college), I basically had to figure it out. I think the way I overcame these obstacles was that I convinced myself that college was the only way that I was going to be successful. I looked at going home as no option at all. That was never an option to me. I was going to finish college. I guess I just instilled in my mind that you know no matter what it takes, I'm gonna finish. I guess I prepared myself mentally for finishing school. That was probably the best thing I could have done too (D1: 1).

> I could never think of anything else. Not the military, not the ..vocational. It was always college. That was because I had them(my parents) as role models, and I had uncles and aunts and other people who had attained further or higher education (D7: 8).

Coping With the Financial Burden

Most of the Samoan students were able to identify scholarships--ie) the Sisters Alumni of the South Pacific, Alliance for Pacific Islanders in Education (APIE), and the Samoan Federation-- that applied to Samoan or Pacific Islander students..These scholarships provide financial assistance, however, few students actually utilized them. Most students, without much assistance have had to develop their own personal strategies in a struggle to finance their education..

> I think in the long run the way I dealt with it is to keep going. I'm not one to more or less bitch or gripe about things. When money's low I say, 'hey, so what.' I'll find another job. If I don't have a job I'll find another job. I'm not one of those who like to struggle struggle struggle. I just keep going. When I first came out here there were times when, I went through so many cars. I'd buy a car and then sell it again just so I could pay my tuition. Then when I tell my parents they'd say, 'Ok go call your older brothers...I don't want to call my brothers! I never wanted to go to college. That would be my resort. Not to make a profit, but as long as I could pay my tuition. If my tuition was $300.00, I'd sell the car for $300.00 whether it was worth more or not. That's what happened to me when I came out here. But to me, I understand that that's just part of it (the struggle)(D4: 2-3).

Fortunately he was able to get a campus job which reduces his tuition down to three dollars per semester for zero to six units. The school which a person attends may have a program through employment which reduces the tuition costs for students.

Assistance for Student Athletes

One of the athletes has been assisted through his final college year by a program through the National Collegiate Athletic Association called Final Score which helps college athletes finish out their final classes to graduate.

> In college...the thing that'll help them is if they get a career counseling too especially at an early stage like in their freshmen year, get em geared for something else besides football. If it wasn't for Final Score...Final Score is the only program that I know exists in the Pac Ten. In fact, that's the best program. You can't ask for more. It helped me finish school because in the army, they have programs like the GI Bill. I didn't participate in the GI Bill because I thought I had no use for going back to school, or finishing school (D9: 5).

Solutions/Recommendations

In spite of the many obstacles that these students described, both within and external to their community, each discussion at various points produced a multitude of ideas on solutions to the higher educational dillemma Samoan students face. Whether or not the solution included greater mentoring, or an implementation of effective college preparatory programs which monitor and prepare students for college admission, or or the creation of job placement and training centers, or whether a class should be created to enlighten others of the issues which pertain to the Samoan/Pacific American experience, the students constructed a wide range of ideas arose from the discussions.

Each student devised their own approach to addressing many of the educational issues of Samoan youth based on their own personal experiential realities. For that matter, their suggestions covered a various range of ideas.

Addressing Financial Needs

Linking to Small Businesses

In response to the financial problems that appear to be the most common obstacle amongst Samoan students, one student discussed the existence of small Samoan businesses. One student suggested that those particular businesses should create joint relationships with certain colleges as a means of sending employees or possible future

employees to school. In other words, he saw these types of businesses offering internships. Besides gaining a greater initial foothold past the door to college,this kind of effort may be useful in helping Samoan students not only become more financially secure through college, but also may provide an opportunity to develop job skills which prepare the students for future employment.

> ...these Samoan businesses, people that have well-established businesses, and doing well. I think those people should be approached as far as hiring Samoan students that are in college. Or even if they hire Samoan workers, offer a program where there's if you go to school, I'll reimburse you, help, to help them through, that will be a way of them helping the Samoan community. ... if you know you've got a house full of Samoan workers, at least set up a program and say hey, you guys want to learn another skill to move up in my company, I could send you to school. You could go to school part time and I'll pay your tuition. You know, you're not only investing in their future,they're more or less going to put back into your company in being better workers. programs where Samoan businessmen like that should have programs like that. If you ever want to hire a Samoan..And by the next, the next thing you know, you can become an executive of a company or get your degree and move on to something else(D4: 18).

Another student suggested the need for more scholarships to fund Samoan and other Pacific Islander students. He mentioned that there is a need for a greater amount of funding for effective programs and scholarships.

> I'd like to see more scholarships and funding. I know economics is a big deal for Samoan college students. Mostly that and some time management(D1: 10).

Reserved Common Space

On the condition that there was enough time and money, one student constructed the image of a central base for Pacific Islanders to come together and congregate. There they would be able to utilize resources that they otherwise would not have much access to.

> A Pacific Islander resource center independent from Asians. Completely independent from Asians. That's what we're going through. I feel like that (a library) would go to a Pacific resource center along with job placement,and housing information(D8: 6).

A Pacific American Studies Course

She also suggested the significance of a course taught at the college level which would address Pacific American issues, and how such a course may bring together Pacific Islander students who usually have a difficult time trying to find each other.

> I think Pacific Issues are good. They need to have some type of knowledge of what's going on with because a lot of them have a very romanticized view of what the country or places of their ancestry. A lot of it is because it's based on the entertainment thing. Samoa's so beautiful, it's so peaceful, it's relaxed, it's a beautiful country, we're our culture is about loving everyone, and we treat our guests with respect..it's all hospitality. We are Samoa! the song, and yet, they don't know about the struggle for independence in Western Samoa. They don't know about the Spanish influenza and how it killed a large percentage of the population. and you don't know about the racist laws that were administered by the colonial administration. They don't know about a lot of the history of the **Maoris**, the Tahitians, what's going on with the Hawaiian land, the sovereignty movement. They need to know that because they don't have a, they don't know what's going on. And I think that by seeing that these, that they're going through these struggles or went through these struggles, I think they can then identify more with or at least have a better or realistic sense of what they're about. I mean it changes their identity. Hopefully one to a more empowered. An identity that's based on what' they've learned, and what's really going on than on images(D7: 12-13)..

Asian American studies courses at an introductory level often are titled, "Asian Pacific Islanders ....." , however, the curriculum on Pacific Islanders is minimal, or sometimes, an empty set. Although some students would like these kinds of courses developed independently from larger ethnic studies departments, one student suggested that such courses be emphasized in the meantime through Asian American Studies.

> They should develop classes just like what they do with integrate on what Asian American programs have. But the problem with that is that there's not enough professors that would have that background. But then again, you don't have too many Samoans that have that background...the educational teaching background. That experience. I'm sure you can find Samoans that are qualified to teach that course but that's what they need is to be integrated with the Asian Am programs and offer those kinds of course. Probably UH would have a better program there. Those issues won't be addressed unless there's a big need for 'em. But there are ...I think they're isolated because in an area where Samoans are heavily concentrated, maybe those are the areas with the nearby Universities where the schools should offer like Dominguez, Long Beach, Berkeley, or even Washington, UW. They should offer that type of curriculum at UCLA too. But even then they should put it in the Asian Am studies too. But again, you're going to need people with that background. I think that would be the biggest drawback. Plus, I think the school itself would have a problem with that because they base eveything on 'is

there a need for that?' and since Samoans represent only probably less than one percent of the population, they don't see a need for that either(D9: 7-8).

Samoan Language and Culture Programs

Along with the knowledge of Pacific American history and issues, most of the students, even those from American Samoa who understand with fluency the Samoan language and culture believed that having classes in Samoan language to accommodate a newer generation of Samoan youth would have a positive value for students at all levels--from elementary through college.

At a high school level where Pacific Islander student populations are significant (at over 3%) as well, other students suggest the implementation of classes if not at the schools, then through the Samoan churches or other community services.

> Samoan class...You can do that in the churches. we have these buildings.. At our church we put on this play, this little skit that I wrote about the **Mau** movement. It was a movement for independence that they had. Basically it just educated people about the difficulties and the struggles that these people faced. Their leader who was a martyr was shot while demonstrating in a peaceful protest. I think have you ever heard of that? **Tamasese**[3]... we did that, and a lot of people who saw it said, 'you know what? I never knew that stuff.' And then when I start to talk to them, they're always like, 'you know I really, one of the things I really regret was not learning the language...not knowing more about the culture.' So you're like there is this desire. I know that there is a desire on the part of many Samoans who were raised here to know more about their culture. Then if you can do that and give them another alternative for Samoan identity, and very positive alternative. One that emphasizes the importance of education,one that emphasizes the importance of values, family values, ..(D7: 10).

Despite the difficulties in implementation, at a higher educational level, most students seemed to find a positive value in Samoan Language Culture Programs as beneficial. They see the program as similar in function to a class on Pacific American Studies.

> At the college level? That would be so cool. I think if you're in high school, and you see wow they offer Samoan language in college. Wow! that's pretty neat. And what it does is it, it shows hey your culture has some kind of worth, some meaning to other people. It's not something that you should be ashamed of, or something that you see as just maybe burden, tiresome, or some kind of not that your culture is some kind of burden, but more that hey other people want to study,

> hey other people are interested in it. It should be on the college campus. It should be in some way available to them in high school, and maybe even as early on as in the elementary, primary levels....language. You should be very proud of this cultural heritage that you have. I agree with you on that. I think it would be good to have Samoan language classes (D7: 10).

> Oh yes. The Polynesian languages are a beautiful thing, and to us I mean, not only to teach it to other people but because of the Americanized Samoan child to teach it to other people. Yeah. They can have it. Actually here in the xxxxx system we are able to be exempted from taking a foreign language to fulfill our GE courses, and the way we do that is what they do is they give us an extensive test on the Samoan language. If we had a Samoan class, I'm sure all the Samoan students would take that course(D6: 16).

Another student discussed how the influence and significance of the Samoan church can also be helpful as a pipeline for the dissemination of educational services to Samoan youth. This student designated the Samoan church as a site for the implementation of programs which empower and instill confidence in Samoan youth towards their educational futures.

> They're the ultimate cultural Center for Samoans in America. Some place with that strong symbolism should be a place that helps kids cope and assimilate....That should be a target place for tutorials. That should be a place where kids who wouldn't normally ask questions should feel comfortable. Cultural traits are embedded, but in a context like that, the kids can let their guard down and just ask away. This allows for Samoan students to be leaders. PISA(Pacific Islands Students Association) can come in there and talk to kids about schools. They should be designated leaders aside from the **matai** and the **faifeau** as far as teaching youth (D1: 8)

Tutorials/Mentorships: Addressing the Educational Needs of Youth

In relation to addressing the issue of academic failure amongst Samoan students, a very general observation through discussions is that there is an urgent need for greater existing resources in place to specifically address the needs of Samoan youth in terms of preparing them for, or helping them to stay in college. The common response to this problem was the call for effective intervention through the creation of mentorships, whether they be one on one, or carried out by a team of Samoan college students to serve as, in essence, docents for discussing questions and concerns Samoan youth would otherwise be uncomfortable talking about.

I think the one program I know that could be effective is a one on one mentoring program. We tried to start it last year and I had one student who really took heed of it because she really needed it. And the mentoring program comes back to that idea that I keep, I guess is instilled in my mind between the communication. You know a lot of our Samoan students have things that bother them--things that they hold within themselves they can't speak to no one about. But if you have that mentoring program where it's not basically academic, but life wise, how is your mind really doing? How is your life really going? Not what's on the outside, but all the psychological problems that students have now, I mean we have a lot of students who on the outside look like they're having a ball. They're getting through this flying colors, but when you really look at it and look on the inside, they're really bothered. There's a lot of problems going on that they're not able to talk to anyone else about. I think it'll work because I've gone through one of those with a student here. I mean it's they feel more comfortable talking to somebody one on one, and somebody they know that is just to listen. If need be if I can give them advice that can help them out, then you know, so be it, but moreover just somebody to listen to their problems(D6: 14-15, emphasis added).

Well, I see the mentoring thing here. I think they need more of those mentoring programs. They need more of those programs. They need to bring out people like xxxx, you know people who are like that to the community. Not just, you see all these people, they bring out the high chiefs. They bring out the people that are making it. The only thing a high chief can tell you is, **Talofa vava**, all that Samoan crap, but what advice can you give me? What experience have you had in college?(D4: 13-14).

What Counselors/Teachers Need to Know

Although a few students remembered counselors, faculty, and staff who were helpful to them in preparing them for the higher educational process, most students could not recall staff who were of much help. If anything, the counselors and teachers were the ones they felt need some advice. A collaboration of these ideas is discussed.

Remember I told you when I was first looking over the questions, remember I told you how I would categorize your study, you have Samoan students that grew up here, and you have your other students that grew up in Samoa. Those two kids have totally different values. They're separated. They may say that we're both Samoans, share something in common, but when it comes right down to it, they're two totally different points of view. So I think a counselor should know that. If they see a Samoan kid walking into an office they should know that this kid's coming from Samoa, and this kid's coming from the mainland. Don't treat them all the same. Because the kid's from Samoa, I would know for a fact that I would have an easier time with a kid from Samoa than a kid from out here.
I know a kid from Samoa, they're going to strive to make things easier for you first. I think it's natural for Samoan kids who come from Samoa to say, "Ok, Not to make things any harder...' They have that, 'Not to make things any harder, I won't ask for much...' Out of courtesy, out of respect they're going to say, 'Ok,

this person's a, he's a counselor, I'll just tell them what I need,' and they have that attitude where,'No,no, no, no, no, whatever's easier for you.' That's the attitude I had when I came. And then you have your kids out here who were raised out here who more or less know the program or so to speak, and they'll say, 'Well, why can't I do this? You guys have to offer me....', or might even have the attitude where 'You guys owe me this.' They would also, might need to know the background of the kid as far as are they a church-going member? Do they belong to a church? How involved their family is in the church. Sometimes their family's get so involved in the church, they forget everything else, thinking they're doing the right thing. Which is ok. God everything, but, come on, man(D4: 13).

I think what counselors need to understand about Samoan students is that there is no communication. That's very important to me that a lot of Samoan kids don't have the communication vary with their parents. There's a communication barrier when it comes to Samoan kids and their parents especially within schools because parents just say 'Go to School, Get good grades.' They don't understand that. There are classes and sometimes there's other stuff that kids need to talk about their parents about that Samoan kids can't. It's not because they can't but it's just because they feel very uncomfortable. And that's one thing our counselors need to understand and need to know about Samoan students. Some Samoan students are very tempermental, and counselors have this stereotype that when a Samoan kids a Samoan kids voice goes up, they're about to hit them. They're about to get violent. But that's just the way we talk. We're very loud people, but we're very easy, we're people that are very easy to please..you know, just help us, understand us(D6: 13).

You know I think if they know a little bit about their background,....kind of get a background on the kid on the Samoan kids...Where is he from? What type of neighborhood did he grow up in? Environment plays a big role as far as your mentality. Environment plays a real, environment plays a big role as far as your mentality is concerned because a kid from Long Beach has a different mentality than a kid from Compton because of the different environment he's grown up in. I mean a kid from Long Beach could have grown up in the nice part of Long Beach. The kid from Compton,..I don't know if there's any good parts of Compton, but...you know he had to grow up in that thug life...a very thuggish type of mentality. You know you'll get two different types of individuals. They may be both good students, but with different attitudes, different mentalities. So you have to treat each and every student different. You can't treat them all the same. Because they all come to you with different mentalities(D3: 9).

Empowerment through Massive Campus Organizing

At the college level, Samoan and other Pacific Islander American students have found ways to respond to the very sparce amount of resources or organizations which exist to serve their purpose and needs. They confront that lack of resource by forming their own campus organizations to: meet their need to outreach; provide more information to Samoan youth about higher education; to cure the homesickness for Pacific Islander students who

have arrived to study here in California from abroad; and to address the problems associated with a lack of representation of Samoan and Pacific Islander American youth in general in higher education.

> xx's trying to start a Polynesian club, but I don't think he's going to have time. They had one, but having clubs like that kind of gives you a support. You have not only your peers, but peers of the same culture. You have a bunch of Samoan students getting together which kind of eases the....especially because this year Dominguez, they've got a lot of students from Samoa. And I know for a fact that those students are, there are gonna be times when they're by themselves in the library and , there gonna (think), 'Oh I miss home,' and just having somebody else from back home makes things easier for them. They're all from Samoa. You guys are in the same..and you guys are going to need each other. You're going to see the Black students hanging out at the Black student union. You guys are going to see the Orientals hanging out. You guys are going to wonder, 'Gosh, why can't we hang out'?(D4: 16)

Currently, some students from various college campuses have joined forces to initiate a pan-campus organization called PUA, Pacific Unity Alliance. This organization was designed to address the needs of Pacific American college students in a Pan Pacific type of alliance. The students created this infrastructure to respond to the aforementioned lack of relevent campus organizations as well.

> I think that's all that I would really focus on, and then not just past high school, support in college. And that would be where something like PUA can come in. PUA can work as a support, or PISA or the local groups to support in college. Support in terms of being there. Being there to answer questions. Somewhere for them to hang out and feel anytime,and feel that its ok for them to just hang out and speak Samoan, or just hang out and BE Samoan...this person knows what you feel, what you're talking about. You have this commonality(D7: 12).

Early Intervention

Most discussions about the difficulties of the Samoan educational experience at the college level suggest that interventions, or efforts to guide and prepare Samoan students should begin years before college--sometimes as early as elementary school through the senior year of high school. One student discussed how he believed an early intervention involving parents could more effectively increase the access to higher education for Samoan youth.

I always said, and I think if you could have some kind of program that starts in elementary, and follows them throughout high school. Don't just try it, don't just be there in high school, because by high school it's too late. By junior high school its' too late. Even by upper elementary grade, it's too late.
But you start early. You start talking to the parents when they're that early that age. Start talking to them, and start getting into start trying to say, 'hey, this is what you need to do.' I would go to think that it's something that should happen way before college. I think if you get in with the parents early, and they do this in their homes, then the kid should be doing ok, because they're taught in school, and then they have the reinforcement at home. I think you have to deal with the students once you start to see that they're lagging, or they're not on..or you start to see some academic problems. Then you bring in intervention, tutoring and counseling and trying to help them, and just basically staying with them as they go along. And having and maybe recognizing that there are certain times, where you need....when they go from elementary to junior high school, that's a big jump. There needs to be I think some kind of support network there, where the kids don't succumb to the peer pressure, don't succumb to the whole, the stereotypes. Because then when they make the jump from the middle school to the high school, like you said, you have cases where people have gone straight As and just dropped to Ds and Fs(D7: 11-12).

Another student reflected similar feelings.

You know my thing is, my thing right now is that seems to be the problem with what's going on nowadays with the Samoan community is they're waiting til they get into high school to try to solve the problem, which is too late. They need to stop it where it all begins which is elementary. they need to make sure that these kids are getting the right..are doing the right thing as far as...the reading. A lot of these kids are just getting passed, they're just passing them through because they have to. sometimes teachers are...so you have to....I've always felt that by the time kids get into high school it's too late. A lot earlier.. I think they should start, actually they should start from the first grade. From the first grade on up I think they should start as far as implementing reading, writing, that seems to be the most, that seems to be the biggest problem with the Samoan kid as far as because that was my problem at the beginning. I mean I knew how to read and write. I did pretty well, but I didn't do well enough to where I felt very comfortable. And that's where you need to get these Samoan kids to feel comfortable with reading and writing in the English language(D8: 10).

Another student suggested for an intervention program at any level was the concept that the program itself is something students will basically feel comfortable with and enjoy. The program needs to be one which encourages hard work, but yet offers rewards by any means.

For high school kids? First of all, I'd make it fun. I'd make sure that it's fun for them. Yeah, a lot of hands on stuff...field trips,...you know the best classroom **is** experience. I believe that a lot. You can't just talk to them about a whale. Take the kid to see a whale! For me, the number one thing would be making the class fun.

Or whatever the program fun. Because a Samoan kid, once something's fun, BOOM!, I'm there. If it's fun, hey, that's what keeps the kids going. In Samoa they used to use volleyball. At least in our village. the **faifeau** would say, ok we're having clean up day for the church. And sometimes you'll hear the kids say, "AWWW..." 'And then after clean-up, we'll have a volleyball tournament and a barbeque.' **BOOM!** And then I would like programs not just for the kids but for the kid's parents. You know, make ... a family day. If you're going to have a program three days a week. Have one of those days on a non-bingo night when parents can come. Or even talk to the...go out to the churches and talk to them even though the churches need money, but you can't just invest in the church all the time. You've got to make them see that an investment in your kids is the way to go. (D4: 14-15).

Roles of Samoan College Students

All of the students believed that they had a responsibility to younger members of the Samoan community, other Samoan/Pacific Islander college students, and each other.

To the Youth:

Samoan college students plays a big role. Because then the younger generation starts looking at them and says hey, if he can do it, I can do it. That type, and that's the type of attitude we need to get within our younger generation...the attitude of man I can do it, if I do the right thing...I think I have a big role most importantly a role model. Someone they could look up to . I'm not saying to look up to me, but I feel like we're in a position where whatever we do is for the betterment for us all as far as if someone goes out and gets their doctorate and comes back and teaches at any of our schools. That's for all of us not just for himself. It shows the kids out there that there's a place for usout there. You know I mean even though there's not that many, if you want to be there, if you want to go that far, you can. I think that's the biggest role that me as a college student and all of us play(D8: 7, 11).

But I think just the fact that you're somebody, you're a Samoan going to college, says a lot. I always talk to, or meet new people, Samoans especially, I say, Oh yeah I'm taking classes here, I'm trying to finish. I say hey, more power to you. I think you being in school says a lot(D4: 16).

I think yeah, definitely as role models to the younger people. If they can offer their expertise in terms of tutoring. I think one thing about college students is that we're so, we're college students. We're trying to finish college. So it's hard for us to be there as role models while we're in college. Because we're trying to get through college. That's our main objective. We have a college role model competing with the gang role model. The gang role model is around all the time. The gang role model actually shows you, hey you're in a gang, it's immediate. It's right there, and it makes a lot of sense. You don't need to sell being in a gang. you see what's going on around. You see gang members kind of walking around and not feel like... because they've got their own protection or whatever so...I think college students need to be back in the community, but it's tough being in college, trying to have a life, and doing this also. That's why now I feel being having coming out of

college, and working, I have the ability to do so even though I have a lot of obligations to my job. I will always, like that day that I took off to come to the conference. That's something I can do, and that's something I feel I need to do. And it's funny, you'll find people that want to be involved...graduates, because they feel like they need to give back. You never really have to sell anybody on giving back, or tutoring because I think it's just a natural, it's natural for them to want to give back, and help out (D7: 13).

To Each Other

Basically working with each other as far as giving each other help emotionally as well as spiritually. I think towards each other the role we play is I would say if anything supportive of each other motivators. Definitely I think it's individual, but when we get together, it's more of a team effort. Because even though all of us have different majors, we all work together to stay in school and to, motivate each other to keep on going with whatever it is we want to pursue. So it's independent, but then it goes back to how Samoans are family. Right? Family structure, and when you go to school, they break it down to an individual thing like you think for yourself. But when you're at home, your dad or your mom thinks for all of you. That's kind of like how you compare that as far as I compare it anyway. I guess its an individual thing. But when you go back to your roots its a family thing. Which I think family structure is very important to Pacific Islanders especially Samoans (D8: 7, 11).

People who have similar experiences so that they can emphasize with what students are going through and to give them some kind of solution, and can give them some kind of family away from their actual family. And it's funny Samoans, I think can take to other Samoans real fast. You know, there's never any of that, I don't really know this guy. I don't trust him and all that. It's funny. Someone can come in the club and all of a sudden, bam they're in. It's tight like really fast. It's not like oh we need to see what this guys all about, or he maybe I need to see what this group's about. It's like right away, and that's because of this shared experiences just knowing what's going on(D7: 13).

Words of Advice

If given the opportunity to give general advice to younger Samoan and other Pacific American youth, and to other Pacific American students, the discussion was open.

To the Youth:

I would use my own experience. Where I am now. I would show them what college has done for me. Rather than just being vaque, and saying college will open up opportunities for you...That's kind of being vague. I don't have to worry about money. Now that I have a job that pays me more than I would make at a minimum wage job,or blue collar job, I have the financial ability to support myself, to help out my parents, and to really enjoy life. I think that's something that everybody can associate with---having that financial stability, financial independence, being able to do things. It comes down to that. Also it just feels good to know that I am doing something I have chosen to do. That I didn't just go

out and find a job any job. anywhere they would hire me. This is something I've chosen to do, and I've valued. It's funny. People say, yeah in Samoa they really respect the teachers, but there's a level of respect here that remains in this country. But that's how I would talk to them about college...just being trying to hit as close to home as possible (D7: 14).

Have faith in themselves. Have faith in the strength that brought them to where they are now. Never give up on your first try. Never give up and I think that's the most important is that we need to ...we've gone through so many obstacles to get to where we are now. We can't let it stop us once we get here. And that's one thing I urge our students. I would urge our Samoan high school students..You go through obstacles all your life to get somewhere, and once you get there that should be where you use all your energy. You shouldn't let all one little obstacle turn you down or tear you down. And another advice I would give them and probably the most important is...when you need something, ask for it. Don't sit there and wait for it to come to you. A lot of our kids are afraid to ask for help, but I think, when you need it ask, because it's never gonna come to you unless you ask(D6: 16).

I would say it's a long road, but you have to take your step because not only will you benefit your people, but most importantly you will benefit yourself because by rising up from where you came from and going on forward, you're just advancing our people, and bringing up our people with you. Because like nowadays, stereotypes of Samoans more and more of us being in prison, of us being gangsters, or just blue-collar workers, and we really don't have the professionals---I mean we do, but there's so very few professionals out there that we can really strive to become or be like them or look up to. I think that that's why you have to go to school or to college to make something of yourself, and of your people--to break the model(D8: 7).

Basically just, be ready, be prepared. Don't necessarily think that college is going to be like high school. A lot of things are gonna change. A lot of things are gonna change within your life like academics as far as you're not gonna have...they're not gonna pressure you as far as going to class all the time. This is all basically on your own whether you want it or not, it's up to you. But if you ever wanted something, you've got to go out and get it. They will not give it to you. the white man will not give you anything(D3: 11).

To Other Samoan Students:

Basically, not to give up. They've come a long way and to just give it all up for whatever reason it isn't worth it. Basically what I tell them is, you will never know the feeling of walking the platform knowing that you've just received a degree unless you stick it out. Show the world that the stereotype they have of students dropping out is just a stereotype(D6: 17).

Think about where you came from. Yeah.. Like I said think about where you came from and think about where you're gonna be. If it don't pan out. How worried are you? Sometimes sometimes kids need that, that little added pressure or that little push. You know to get to school. That I know you shouldn't worry about what other people say, I don't care what you say or who you are..in the Samoan culture, you're always worried about what other people say. For Samoan people, for some

reason that is something it's embedded in you for some reason, I don't know why, but you're always worried about what other people are going to say. Because you are not the only one who's going to be ridiculed, like I said before, the family. Your'e not just representing yourself. it's your village. So you know that's like I said before Samoan people are very prideful, very proud, and that hinders them a lot of times, but then that's like a motivational thing for them too because that motivates them to go out and prove the others wrong(D3: 11).

Additional Thoughts

The students at various points in the discussion helped to refocus our perspectives on various issues. They restructured the meaning of pride, peer pressure, provided a Pan-Pacific perspective, and a special project to occupy the youth.

Redefining Pride

> Another thing could be instilling pride....not the pride that these gangbangers be throwing, you know Samoan pride...you know, pride not only in your church and your family, that is natural, but pride in the fact that you are a Samoan kid going to school and trying to finish. See nowadays, it's cool to be bad. They say, "ah, homey shot up the homeboys house." Oh damn! They praise stuff like that. Even my nephew. I got one nephew who just came out of jail, and everytime he talks to me, he's starts talking to me, 'Aw,xxx, my homey this!!!
> ' Do you think I want to hear that crap? Tell me something I want to hear. When are you going to get your GED? When are you going to finish school?
> And that brings him down. I go I don't mean to ruin your trip, dude, but think about it are you going to spend the rest of your life going in and out? How would you like to be forty and have nothing to show for it?(D4: 15)

Pan Pacific Perspective

Some students feel that a majority of Pacific Islander Americans---Chamorros(Guam), Tongans, Hawaiians, and Fijians, share along with Samoans the common experiences in higher education. Being the few--the needles in the haystacks--gives them more of a reason to collectively unite.

> Definitely joining my XXX at school that was probably one of the best things I could have ever did. It definitely motivates me to stay in school because you're with other people who kind of have the same goals as you.
> Everybody in my club, we all have different majors, but we all want to achieve for ourselves and for our people whether we're Tongan, Samoan, or whatever. Because there's not too many of us in front of us(D8: 2).

Redefining Peer Pressure

If peer pressure, as identified by most of the respondants as the cause of school failure is based on a group of kids following principles, then why not create a context in which students will fall into a positive, rewarding type of peer pressure...a peer pressure to succeed? One student suggested how redefining a peer pressure to make it where a student can be pushed to engage in productive activities conducive to educational, or personally intellectual, and positive social growth.

> Yeah, that's a good one. That's because they hook up with other kids. As a matter of fact, a lot of Samoan, Samoan way of doing things follows that pattern too. When you want something done, what you'll do is like there's a bunch of kids and there's a job to be done. Samoan parents, or the older folks what they'd usually do is they would look at the older kid who they think looks like the leader, and say 'hey, come on...um why don't you get your friends to come do this...**fai feau le a** bla bla bla, and after that. And that's all it takes, that one kids going to go, "hey..." Samoans love to follow(D4: 15).

Another student explained how to turn an otherwise hateful and painful comment around by redefining them into words which empower rather than wound.

> It's peer pressure in a positive way. Like you know, I always say this to my younger sister...if you come home with a bad report card, I'm going to beat you up. I always do that. I'm trying to get it so that because when she goes to school, they're going to say you're an **academic geek**. I call him a nerd, and he goes, 'So?" I'm smart.' I always try to use that so that he understands that being a nerd isn't bad. Being smart is good. Knowing things and having knowledge is good. A lot of kids, are like, you're a nerd, you're a nerd in school means you're a NERD, and he's like, 'So?' And he came home, and the reason I call him that, he came home and he goes, 'This kid called me a nerd.' and I said, 'GOOD!' He's like...he just looks and me and he's like, 'Good?' Then he asked me,'What's a nerd?' and I said, 'A smart kid.' So everytime somebody calls him a nerd, he says, '**Thank you!**'(D6: 17).

Endnotes

[1] The interviews were designed and intended to be a medium through which the students could express themselves freely, and generate new ideas.

[2] Many students of color, Asian American, African American, Latina o, Native American, and Pacific Islander American students can attest that as sticks and stones break bones, words also break a person's soul. Racial stereotyping, derogatory statements directed towards students of color affect the course of their lives -- where they will live, where they will attend school, what kind of job they will have. The paths are

infinitely adversely affected by these words that wound. *Words that Wound* 1993, the work of Kimberly Crenshaw, Richard Delgado, Charles Lawrence, and Mari Matsuda through the framework of critical race theory touches upon the compelling issue of racism in the priviledge called "free speech."

[3] Tupua Tamasese was a leader who was killed in the **Mau** movement of Western Samoa. See Field's ***Mau***: *Samoa's Struggle For Freedom*. 1987.

CHAPTER FOUR:

Discussion/Recommendations

Discussion

As the discussions unfolded, each student contributed new perspectives, and ideas. There was, as mentioned before, minimal control over the different variables which can classify the participants for this study. Only ethnicity, age, and the proximity in time of enrollment status, were used to determine participation in the study. Students from a wide range of socioeconomic contexts, and various backgrounds--some from American or Western Samoa as opposed to the United States, some who were athletes, some who were much older than the others and were returning to school after a long period off, some whose parents had completed, or carried a minimal amount of college experience, and some who were going to be the first in their family to go to and graduate from college--participated in this project. In any case, the diverse backgrounds of each student, as well as the relatively informal manner in which the interviews were conducted, allowed for the intended outlet for students to produce a variety of unique, and creative ideas with each interview session.

On Barriers...

The students identified and elaborated things that created hindrance to their access to, and retention in higher education through out the interviews, as well as within their critiques of school systems, programs, and other current structures in place.
While there was a wide range of ideas, there were also many common perspectives.

One of the most prevalent perspectives many of them held towards the challenges they see to higher education for Samoan students in general was financial--being able to afford the rising cost of higher education, and sometimes for that matter, two-fold--paying for an education beyond high school, while facing the challenge to be able to meet obligations to family and kin. While some students were still bound to this responsibility

to family at the college level, others believed that they participate in the responsibilities to a very limited, or even negligible extent. In most cases, the students commonly cited the concern of finding out how to be able to prepare for, and/or overcome the constantly rising expenses of college a main barrier to their education. This observation leads to an area of concern which supersedes the Samoan community --the obvious lack of support networks which could have provided assistance in the form of dissemination of information on any programs which prepare students for the financial and academic challenges of higher education. For that matter, there appeared to be a lack of information about the available support networks as most students very seldomly could recall, outside of their own families, the names of support networks if any existed at all. Most students perceived that the a main obstacle to their college education on both a personal level, and for most Samoan students, was financial. They learned to get financial aid without any guidance or effort on the part of concerned educators, counselors, or from the Samoan community.

Although the second section was designed to find the means--the structural support networks that they possibly were able to use, more barriers appeared to surface in this discussion since most of the students did not credit Samoan community organizations, churches, and the like for their academic achievement. When asked if they could recall if Samoan community organizations, scholarships, or churches were helpful to them, few of the participants could actually recall any instance of assistance. In many ways, they were quick to critique the few organizational structures available.

Once in college the lack of a relevant Pacific Islander services, a specific home-base, or organization was also a challenge for these students to form their own student-run entities. The existing Hawaiian clubs whose purpose they observed to be purely social was a disappointment to them.

In retrospect, the areas of concern within this first section seemed to fall under several general categories. The students discussed challenges within the Samoan

community -- what they felt generally can be considered to be challenges amongst Samoan youth in addition to their own personal challenges. First, they observed that amongst the Samoan youth that poor academic achievement, increased involvement in gangs, fear, as well as financial dillemmas are some of the general hindrances to their ability to access higher education. The remaining barriers--all with sources mainly external to the Samoan community were identified as the marginalization of Samoan, and other Pacific Islander American students due to their issues being overshadowed within those of minority groups with larger populations and support, racism from faculty, or other educational staff, and society in general; a lack of staff reflective of these students--Pacific Islander American staff, and a lack of general resources and support networks, namely in the realm of academic curriculum, and student support and community organizations, within and external to the Samoan community.

Overcoming

A few students discussed the significance of how student-run Pacific Islander clubs which address their needs have been helpful in motivating the few Samoan students on campus to maintain their grades and their enrollment. Most students also wanted to see courses which Pacific American experiences similar to ethnic studies courses for Asian Americans, African Americans, Chicana/o, and Native American students. They also took interest in Samoan language and culture courses. Since teaching such courses require a bachelor's degree or higher, there is a great need increase the representation of Samoan and other Pacific Islander students in college to develop and teach these kinds of courses...

Some students were athletes, and received scholarship assistance from the athletic department. They were able to register for classes before the general student body, having tutoring available, having housing, tuition, and books paid for, and other services.

Most students believed their own personal strength and resiliance helped reassure their educational success. They keep going during a hardship, or a **faalavalave**. Even if

they had to drop out of school for a little bit to help their families, they did not use family as an excuse for failure. They knew they would eventually return to school and finish. Finishing college was expected of them from their families, and was a given. They saw within their families, whether their parents finished college or not, the strengths of their father and/or their mother, or brothers and sisters as something they believed was instilled within them. They expected themselves to do better, to achieve academically.

In any case, Samoan students have with little structural support external to their family, maintained their enrollment by staying active with campus student-run Pacific American clubs, athletics, or encouragement from parents and family. This family support is a contradiction to some studies (Peng, 1978) which have concluded that Samoan culture is not geared for educational achievement.

Recommendations

In the final section, the students turned their critiques into ideas and goals which they believed if implemented would create a more accessible path to higher education for younger Samoan/Pacific Islander students, and help motivate those already in college to stay in and finish. Based on the compilation of suggestions and ideas that formulated the last section in Chapter Three, the recommendations can be organized as follows:

1) Colleges and Universities, as well as primary and secondary schools need to actively recruit, and appoint more Samoan or Pacific Islander faculty and staff who can address the needs of Samoan students.

2) There needs to be a reserved space--an office space, library, and/or conference space, on campus, staffed and funded, and supplied with the resources ---books, stationary, phone, computer, and useful directories for the benefit of Pacific Islander students on college campuses.

3) Teachers need to be more aware of Samoan and Pacific Islander culture. At the high school level and earlier, teachers who work at schools with significant representations of Pacific Islander students need to be trained to help serve these students better.

4) Community projects which incorporate **faaSamoa**, and cater to the interests of Samoan youth need to be developed and implemented.

5) A course on Samoan language and culture needs to be incorporated into the educational system at all levels, from elementary school to college. Similarly, courses which focus on the Samoan and Pacific American experience need to be developed and taught in colleges. These courses should be developed either jointly with an ethnic studies or mainstream department, and pushed for with the help of multi-ethnic student coalitions.

6) Information on programs and services available which assist student-athletes in finishing their college degree needs to be disseminated to Samoan student-athletes.

7) Funded positions for academic outreach to Pacific Islander youth in Southern California need to be created to build a long-term relationship--a buddy system (Bousseau, 1993) between colleges and Samoan grade school students.

8) Educational staff at elementary, junior high, and high schools need to develop a long-term working relationship involving the dissemination of information on college preparatory classes, exams, exam dates, other services available on a regular basis with Samoan parents as a means of more effectively assisting Samoan youth through their pre-college education.

9) There needs to be a link between the emerging Samoan and other Pacific Islander businesses and the education of Samoan youth. On a grander scale, Businesses need to link with the schools to provide internships, or scholarship awards for Samoan and Pacific American youth.

10) Pan-Pacific American efforts must be given the necessary support to provide outreach, orientation, and mentoring to Samoan and other Pacific Islander youth in need of help.

A Call for Further Research

This study being primarily qualitative, and utilizing a small sample creates a difficulty in generalizability. The study involved no more than nine students who were all from Los Angeles County colleges. To keep my study feasible within a very short time frame, I had to minimize the sample size, and conduct a limited amount of interviews. The problems these students faced is pervasive, as discussed in Chapter Two, however, educational systems and structures differ within and across each state, and abroad in other areas where Samoan communities form. Therefore, further studies should be conducted on a larger scale, using a quantitative survey on a larger sample amongst a larger area -- the inclusion of different cities. This kind of study can demonstrate more clearly if the problems Samoan students face coincide no matter where the educational context is located.

Also, there are obviously more Samoan students in high schools than in higher educational settings. A study utilizing blended methodologies including surveys, and focus group interviews with high school students as well as college students may provide further information that might expand the boundaries this study. An increased sample size can provide greater generalizability which would be interesting to uncover.

The problems Samoan students face may more than likely coincide with other Polynesian and Pacific Islander students. Most of the students in this study believed that the experiences they face are shared with other Pacific Islander students. There was truly a call for a Pan-Pacific Islander American student union. Studies involving Hawaiian students on the mainland schools outside of Hawai'i, and with Tongan students who also comprise a significant number in certain schools in Los Angeles County like Hawthorne and Morningside High school, would be fascinating in that they may uncover the educational perspectives of students on a grander, Pan-Pacific American scale.

Closing Remarks

One of the more significant goals of this project--to expose the means by which the college students overcame these barriers --uncovered more idealistic situations as many of the interviewees remain in the stages of overcoming the challenges they continue to face. They have constructed scenarios of how things would be better, if they only could. With the recent passage in the State of California of Proposition 209 which dismantled the legality of the Affirmative Action process that has helped increase the admission and retention of students of color, the challenge to enroll in higher education has become even more difficult for Samoan students as we head into a new millenium. Conservative backlash exists on a national scale to disembody the projects and programs which have for decades been of use to minority students.

Until there is a chance for change, Samoan and other Pacific Islander American students will need to work tenaciously to overcome the stigmas associated with being an

overlooked entity in higher education. As their numbers on college campuses continue to remain minimal, the challenge will remain for Samoan and other Pacific American students to gain a greater voice, representation, and empowerment within the larger student bodies.

APPENDIX A: Terminology [1]

afakasi	literally--half-caste. part-Samoan.
aiga	the meaning of this word is contextual. for the most part, it refers to a 'family' unit.
Aotearoa	New Zealand.
aumaga	young untitled men's association.
aualuma	young untitled women's association.
Chamorro	indigenous person of Guam.
faalavelave	literally--to tangle, to complicate. life cycle events, marriages, funerals, hospital expenses, bail posting, etc. immediate situations for which family members, relatives, etc. are expected to take responsibility and/or contribute money.
faaSamoa	the Samoan way of life. Also **Ola FaaSamoa**.
faifeau	minister.
feau	chores, duties, responsibilities.
feagaiga	literally--a contract. More commonly referred to as a brother-sister (**tama tane-tama fafine**) relationship/obligation.
faigaluega	to work. a job.
fiafiapuupuu	to like something for only a short while, and then lose interest.
fiapalagi	literally--wants to be white. to act white.
fiapoko	a sarcastic attitude. a smart-a__.
Fitafita	literally--a guard. the Samoan guards who were employed by the US Navy, and immigrated in large numbers in 1951 when the U.S. Navy relocated to Hawai'i.
gafa	roots. origins.
Hamo	informal reference to a Samoan.
itumalo	district. political land division.
'ie lavalava	a printed clothing item worn around the waist.

'ie toga	fine woven mats.
Kanaka Maoli	an indigenous Hawaiian.
kovana	governor.
Lapita	a people who as far back as 2000BC created pottery patterns found in New Guinea, Samoa, and Tonga.
le faanoanoa	to mourn.
loko leaga	to be jealous, envious.
lotu	Christianity.
lu'au	a Hawaiian gathering.
malo	political ruling entity in Samoa.
Maori	indigenous person of New Zealand.
Manu'a	a group of islands within American Samoa. Namely **'Ofu, 'Olosega**, and **Ta'u.**
matai	male or female chief, a leader. A highly ranked individual in a Samoan community.
matua	parents.
Mau	literally--to steadfast, to retain. The Protest movement in Samoa.
nu'u	village.
Pagopago	capital of American Samoa, and a village in Tutuila. Pago harbor was a strategic U.S. military possession.
palagi	literally a cloud-breaker, non-Samoans, white folks.
paolo	relatives. **paolo magafa**.
Rapa Nui	Easter Island.
Sahul	land mass now submerged believed to have connected the Malay peninsula to New Guinea. served as a route from which Polynesian voyagers out-migrated to different islands.
Samoa mo Samoa	slogan for the **Mau** movement.
sa'ofa'i	ceremony in which a title is awarded.
Sa X	the Clan of X. For example, **Sa Tupua** is the clan of **Tupua**.

sasa	to spank/slap.
Sulufa'iga	a place of sanctuary, enlightenment.
tama fafine	descended from a woman. A sister.
tama tane	descended from a man. A boy.
tatala	open.
tatau	more than likely where the word "tattoo" came from (European voyagers who mispronounced the word). A skin-pattern delineated to designate maturity, and ascencion in rank.
taupou	the holder of the title of a maiden.
tautua	Service.
Tautua aiga	responsibility to family.
taulelea	untitled men.
to'ona'i	to collect food.
umu	the stone oven in which food is prepared. A feast.
uso	same sex sibling.

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[1] The meanings were defined based on interview informants, Felise Leu Va'a's dissertation, and G.B. Milner's Samoan dictionary.

APPENDIX B: Consent Form

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Thomas Tsutsumoto, Graduate Researcher from Asian American Studies at the University of California at Los Angeles. This study is conducted to produce a masters thesis on the educational experiences of Samoan college students. The qualification for inclusion in this study are Samoan undergraduates of Southern California colleges. You were selected as a possible participant in this study based on these qualifications. This study will be based upon the narratives produced by Samoan undergraduates of Southern California colleges.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The representation of Pacific Islander undergraduate students in the community college, California State University, and University of California systems of higher education generally ranges from 0.2-0.6%. The trend of underrepresentation of Pacific Islander students is pervasive in higher education in every major city where Samoan communities proliferate.

The aim of my study is to: 1) determine the Samoan students perception of barriers or obstacles to their enrollment, access to and retention in colleges, 2) determine the measures they are taking to overcome or cope with these challenges, and 3) determine what they perceive as a means of improving their access to and retention in college. Finally, this study aims to arrive at ideas or common themes surrounding the issues discussed in the narratives they create.

PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

--Review the interview questions, the abstract to the study, the invitation to this study (the recruitment letter), and any other forms that accompany this study
--Review and sign this consent form
--Participate in in-depth interviews
--Participate in a follow-up post interview meeting

Interviews:

The interviews will be arranged as follows:
The interview sessions will be conducted on the campuses in classrooms, conference rooms, or campus lounges areas after school or another appropriate time for the students. The general individual in-depth interviews which may last between two to four hours can be conducted in the respective campus, workplace, or home of the participants at their convenience.

The interviews will only be conducted once. A post-interview follow-up meeting session between the interviewee and the principal investigator will be conducted to discuss the contents of the transcriptions. Provided that the contents are edited and reviewed with the participant, various portions of the transcription will be used for sections of the masters thesis.

The principal investigator will utilize a discussion guide consisting of several questions. The duration of each interview session will be at least two hours. The researcher will conduct the interviews using an outline and interview questions. Finally,

the data will be analyzed by using content-analysis and utilized upon approval of the participant for relevant sections of the thesis..
Furthermore, as a participant you will need to:

--Confirm a meeting time and date for an interview with the principal investigator
--Prepare for and participate in one in-depth interview to be conducted with the principal investigator for a duration of two to four hours at a meeting place of your convenience.

Follow up

A post interview follow-up meeting session with the interviewee may be scheduled if you opt to discuss the contents of the interview transcriptions. You are encouraged to follow-up with the principal investigator to ensure that the contents of the interview are acceptable to you for use in parts of the study.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The potential risks associated with this study are that some topics are better left undisclosed. The disclosure or some personal topics or recollections may cause emotional discomfort, or painful reminders of traumatic experiences.

The principal investigator will meet in a post-interview follow up session with the interviewee to confirm that the content of the transcriptions of the interview are suitable for publication.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

This research is significant to Asian American studies and minority education in several ways. Most of the research that has been done on Samoans and education point within the group as reasons for their underrepresentation, or their problems. This research will attempt to reveal the educational needs of the Samoan community, tap into the larger processes which influence or create the barriers they face external to their community within the educational system, and reveal the changes that are necessary in the educational system to accomodate for these needs. This research will utilize more current models for those purposes.

Most minority research has been conducted on African American, Latino, Asian American, and Native American groups. This study will incorporate the experiences of Pacific Americans to minority research.

Pacific Americans have been fused with part of the pan-Asian ethnic categories. They have been lumped together with Asian Americans for convenient purposes. This study will provide additional information about Pacific Americans to these coalitions, and pools of scholarly work.which center on Asian Americans. Sucheng Chen has mentioned that:

> Although Asian Americans and Pacific Islander Americans have been grouped together under a single rubric, and although the number of Pacific Islanders in a state such as California is rapidly increasing, most Asian Americans are quite ignorant about Pacific Islanders. Most Asian Americans do not know who Pacific Islanders are and they know very little about the history and culture of Pacific

Islanders. This state of ignorance is true not only of the public but also of scholars as well.*

Hopefully, this study will heighten awareness about one aspect of the Pacific American experience and awareness of Pacific Islander culture for scholars as well as the general public. Furthermore, this research may also provide an impetus for a change in university-wide policies, or serve as a basis for the implementation of new policies which may increase the number of Samoan and other Pacific American students, and the hiring of more Samoan and Pacific American faculty. There is a need for an improved academic outreach and recruiting system in the universities for this community. These policies should be aimed at increasing the numbers of Pacific American faculty and administrators, and/or community leaders to help to motivate and retain Samoan students on campus. This study will also try to open up avenues for more research which addresses the specific needs of the Samoan community. In any case, there is a need for more research on this subject, and more policies which can benefit the future for the youth of the Samoans Community.

PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

Subjects for this study will not receive payments for their participation in the study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of using a coding procedure in which a number is assigned to each interviewee. The transcriptions of the in-depth interviews will constitute data for this study. The data will be kept with the principal investigator. Participants of the in-depth interviews are allowed to have access to transcriptions of only their own interviews. Only the principal investigator and participants will have access to the data.

The interviews will be audio-taped. Therefore, a larger portion of the data will be on audio cassette tapes. The participants have the right to review and edit tapes of their own interviews to ensure that the items they approve of the items kept or removed for this study.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You also may refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study.

IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact

Thomas Tsutsumoto	Principal Investigator	(310) 359-1129 (24 hours)
David Takeuchi	Faculty Sponsor	(310) 825-9050

* Luce, Patosina. 1985. The Educational Needs of American Samoan Students. ERIC ED 257886.

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RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact the Office for Protection of Research Subjects, UCLA, Box 951694, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694, (310) 825-8714.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

I understand the procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____
Name of Subject

_____
Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)

_____ _____
Signature of Subject or Legal Representative Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR (if required by the HSPC)
In my judgement the subject is voluntarily and knowingly giving informed consent and possesses the legal capacity to give informed consent to participate in this reserach study.

_____ _____
Signature of Investigator Date

Date of Preparation:
UCLA HSPC Number:
Expiration Date:

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APPENDIX C: Advertisement/Invitation

To: All Samoan undergraduate students

As a graduate student in the UCLA Asian American Studies program, I am interested in talking to Samoan undergraduates from colleges within or around Southern California: Los Angeles County/South Bay and Long Beach, about their higher educational experiences.

Specifically, I am working towards a master's thesis which focuses on the educational experience of Samoan college students in three main areas: 1) the kinds of barriers and challenges Samoan students face towards their access to and retention in college; 2) the ways the few enrolled Samoan college students dealt with or overcame these obstacles to get in and stay in college, 3) what measures do Samoan community and/or church organizations, parents, counselors, college departments, advisers need to take to effectively encourage and successfully help Samoan students get into and stay in college.

If there are Samoan undergraduates interested in chatting in in-depth interview discussions about this topic, or if there are any questions for more details, please contact me: Thomas Tsutsumoto at my e-mail address: ttsutsum@ucla.edu, or at home: Phone number: (310) 996-1926.

Your participation will be very, very greatly appreciated.

Faafetai tele lava!

Thomas Tsutsumoto
10969 Wellworth Avenue #311
Los Angeles, CA 90024

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APPENDIX D: Purpose of the Study

The representation of Pacific Islander undergraduate students in the community college, California State University, and University of California systems of higher education generally ranges from 0.2-0.6%. The trend of underrepresentation of Pacific Islander students is pervasive in higher education in every major city where Samoan communities proliferate.

The aim of my study is to: 1) determine the Samoan students perception of barriers ror obstacles to their enrollment, access to and retention in colleges, 2) determine the measures they are taking to overcome or cope with these challenges, and 3) determine their perceived recommendations on means of improving their access to and retention in college. Finally, this study aims to arrive at ideas or common themes surrounding the issues discussed in the narratives they create.

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APPENDIX E: **Interview Instrument**

Target group:
Samoan undergraduate students from Southern California colleges(community college, California State, and University of California systems)

x. Background information:

Birthplace:_____
Where raised:_____
High school Attended:_____
College Attending/Attended:_____
Class Standing:_____
Age:_____
Gender:_____

If applicable, how many siblings do you have?: Sisters____ Brothers____

Were you expected to go to college?

What is the highest level of education your parents have attained?

Are you the first in your family to go to college?

If your are not the first to go to college, who amongst your siblings have gone to college?

If applicable, how many have graduated?

I. Perceptions of obstacles, and strategies of overcoming

1. What do you believe are generally the most challenging obstacles to getting into and enrolling in college for Samoan students?

> In what ways do you feel peer pressure plays a role in creating barriers for Samoan youth?
>
> In what ways do you believe racial discrimination plays a role in creating barriers to higher education for Samoan youth?

2. What do you believe are the most challenging obstacles in your recollection of getting prepared for enrollment in college?

3. In what ways do you believe you have overcome these obstacles to get into and stay in college?

4. In what ways do you think the values associated with **faaSamoa** may play a role in helping Samoan youth prepare for and achieve in college?

5. What do you believe are the most challenging obstacles to staying in college for Samoan students in general?

6. What do you believe are the most challenging obstacles you have encountered and/or continue to cope with in terms of staying in college?

7. In what ways have you overcome or continue to cope with these obstacles in regards to staying in college?

In what ways do you think the values associated with **faaSamoa** may have played a role in helping you make it past these obstacles and stay in college?

8. What kinds of efforts if at all have counselors made to prepare you for entering and enrolling in college?

9. How do the educational expectations of Samoan families on Samoan men and women differ?

10. In what ways do you feel these differences represent barriers to college for Samoan students?

11. What kinds of scholarships exist, if at all, to help finance the education for Samoan or other Pacific American students?

12. What kinds of responsibilities or expectations do you feel are unique to Samoan students?

In what ways do these responsibilities differ from those expected in classrooms?

How do these differences pose barriers or challenges to the educational access of Samoan students?

Faalavelave: life cycle events, voluntary service, contributions to family for special or emergency situations

1. As a student are you expected to contribute to a **faalavelave**?

2. Annually, what kinds of faalavelave have you participated in?
(What was the **faalavelave** for?--a wedding?, a funeral?)

3. How many **faalavelave's** have you participated in within the past year?

4. If you contribute to a **faalavelave** by volunteering your time or through **feau's**, how much are you expected to contribute in terms of time spent monthly:
_____hours/month

5 If you contribute materially to a **faalavelave**, how much in terms of money and/or gifts do you contributed annually?

Contribution:	**$Amount**
Gifts/Food:	$_____
Money:	$_____
Total:	$_____

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6. If you are expected to provide a service to your parents(**tautua aiga**), how much are you expected to contribute?:
Time:_____hrs/month
Money:_____$/month

II. Structural factors[1] which may have played a role in helping Samoan students get into and stay in college:

1. What kinds of organizations exist, if at all, to help Samoan students get into college? (What kinds of organizations exist, if at all, to address the educational needs of Samoan college students?)

2. How have, if at all, Samoan community organizations played a role in helping you get into college?

3. How have, if at all, Samoan community organizations played a role in keeping you in college?

4. How do you believe Samoan community organizations in general may help Samoan students get to and through college?

5. How have, if at all, Samoan churches and **faifeau** played a role in helping you gain access to college?

6. How have, if at all, Samoan churches and **faifeau** played a role in helping you stay in college?

7. Who, in your recollection, has been able to motivate, guide, and serve as a mentor to you as a Samoan student in terms of getting you into college?

   How, if at all, have counselors or faculty in high school played a role in helping you get into college?

   How if at all, have advisors or faculty in college been effective in guiding you and supporting your education in college?

   Who, if any, were able to provide mentoring or tutoring for the educational needs of Samoan youth?

8. Who, if any, has been a key to motivating and helping you stay in college?

   What ways, if at all, have parents or **aiga** play a role or provided a means of support in keeping you in college?

   What role do you think your parents can play in effectively encouraging or supporting your decision to pursue a college education?*

---

[1] structural factors are factors which relate and are not limited to main organizational entities mentioned here--a community based organization, a religious or educational institution, or a family.

III. Suggestions, Recommendations

1. What do you think counselors need to know about Samoan students so that they could better suit their needs, and effectively encourage more Samoan students to go to college?

2. What kinds of things do you think faculty and staff should know about Samoan high school students so that they could provide better assistance and guidance to them?

3. How do you believe Samoan community organizations may be able to help Samoan college students get in, stay in and make it through college(2 parts-getting in and staying in)?

4. What kind of information and/or advice do you think Samoan parents need to have in order to effectively help encourage their children to go to college?

5. What kinds of organizations or programs can be developed to address the needs of and issues relating to Samoan college students?

   What kinds of activities or plans can colleges create to address these needs and prepare more Samoan youth for college?

   What kinds of outreach, tutorials, or mentorships could be created to address the needs of Samoan youth?

6. What kinds of things do you think faculty and staff in high school/college should know about Samoan college students so that they can provide better assistance to them?

7. What kinds of programs can colleges implement to **recruit** and **retain** more Samoan students?
   How would this program serve the youth of the Samoan community and prepare them for admission to college?

8. What kinds of courses do you think should be developed to address the needs or issues amongst Samoan and other Pacific American youth?

   What would be the curriculum of this course?
   What kind of literature would you want to see used in this kind of course?
   What kinds of issues should this course address?

9. What roles do you believe Samoan college students have to younger members of the Samoan and Pacific American community in helping them gain greater access to higher education?

10. In what ways do you believe Samoan college students can assist or provide support for each other through college?

11. What advice would you give to Samoan high school students about going to college?

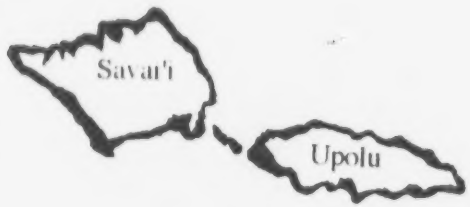
12. What advice would you give other Samoan college students to help them stay in and graduate from college?

13. Are there any other ideas you might have wanted to suggest or discuss related to the Samoan educational experience?

Faafetai tele lava

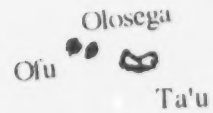
Samoan Archipelago (Adopted from Meleisea, 1987).

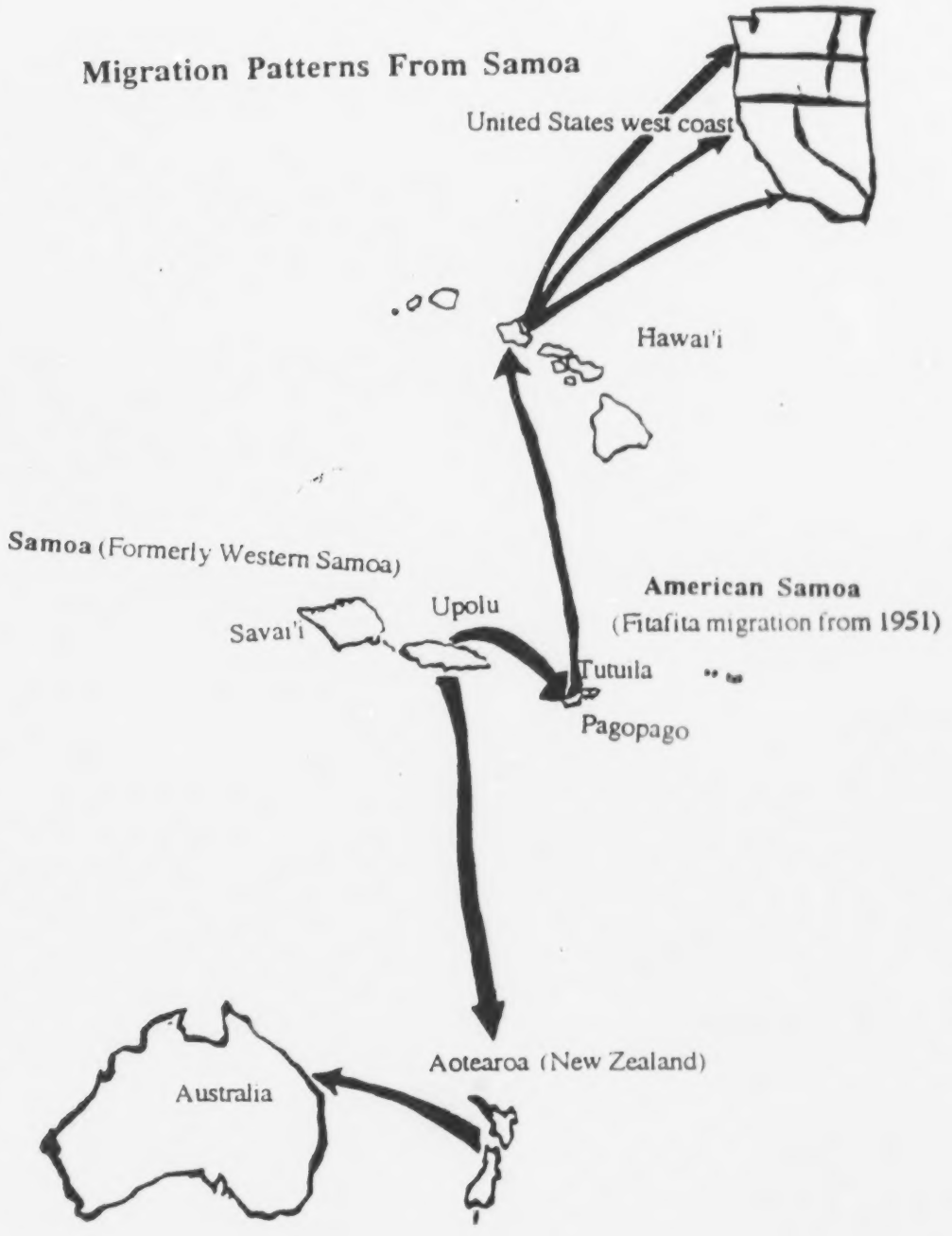
Samoa (Formerly Western Samoa)



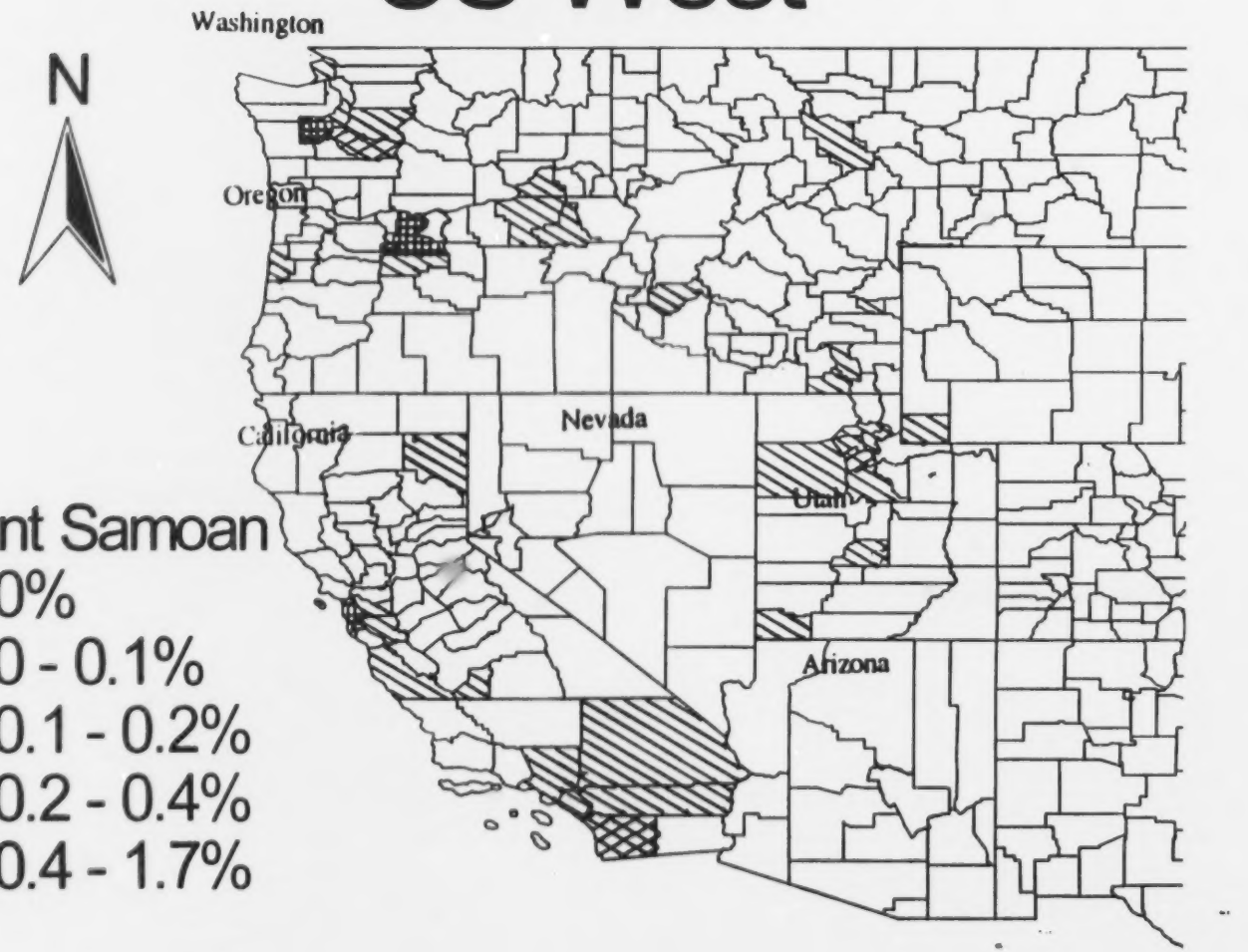
American Samoa (As of 1899)

Manu'a Group




Migration Patterns From Samoa
United States west coast
Hawai'i
Samoa (Formerly Western Samoa)
Savai'i
Upolu
American Samoa
(Fitafita migration from 1951)
Tutuila
Pagopago
Aotearoa (New Zealand)
Australia

US West


N
Washington
Oregon
California
Nevada
Utah
Arizona
Percent Samoan
0%
0 - 0.1%
0.1 - 0.2%
0.2 - 0.4%
0.4 - 1.7%

101

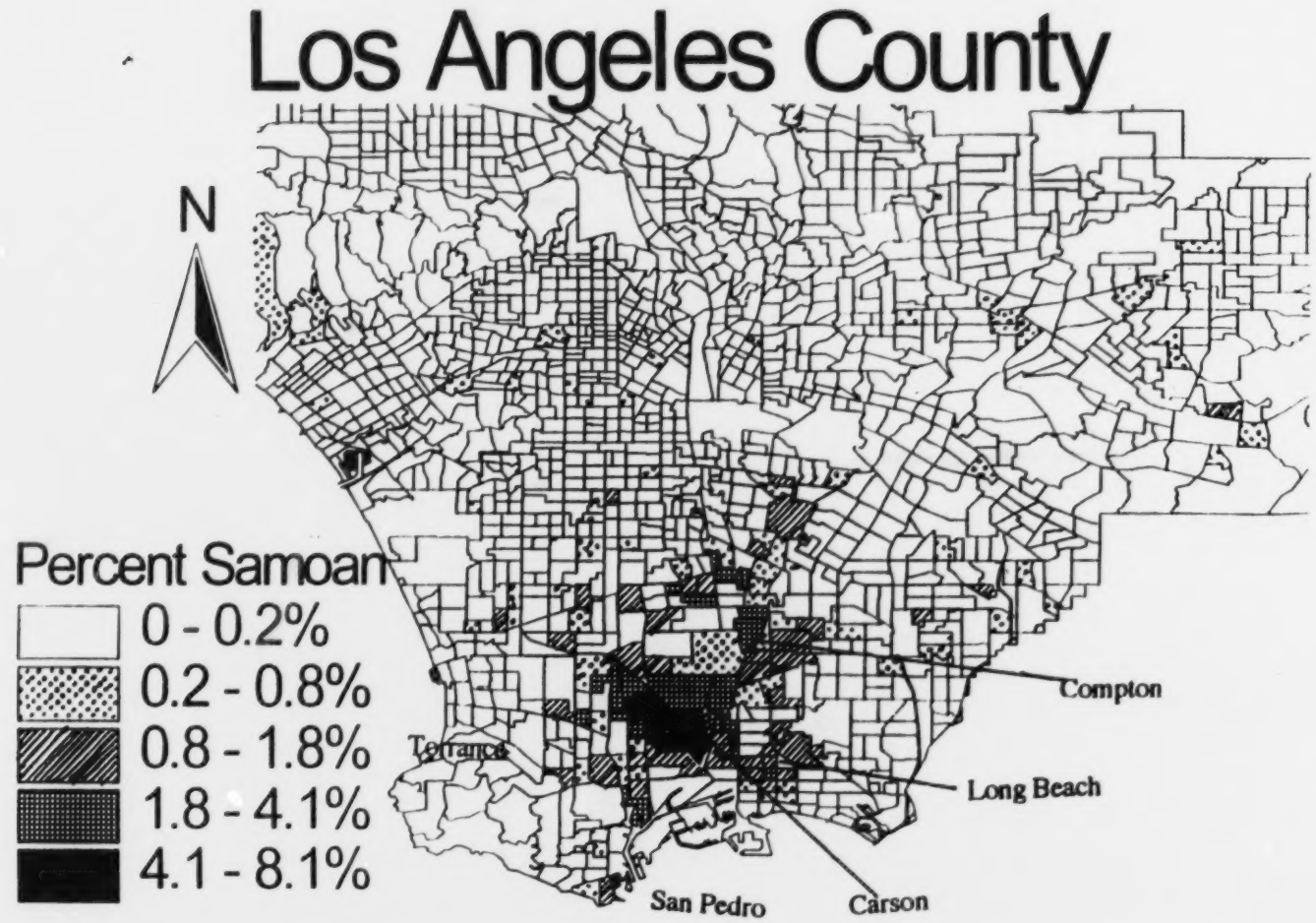
California Counties

Percent Samoan

0 - 0.1%

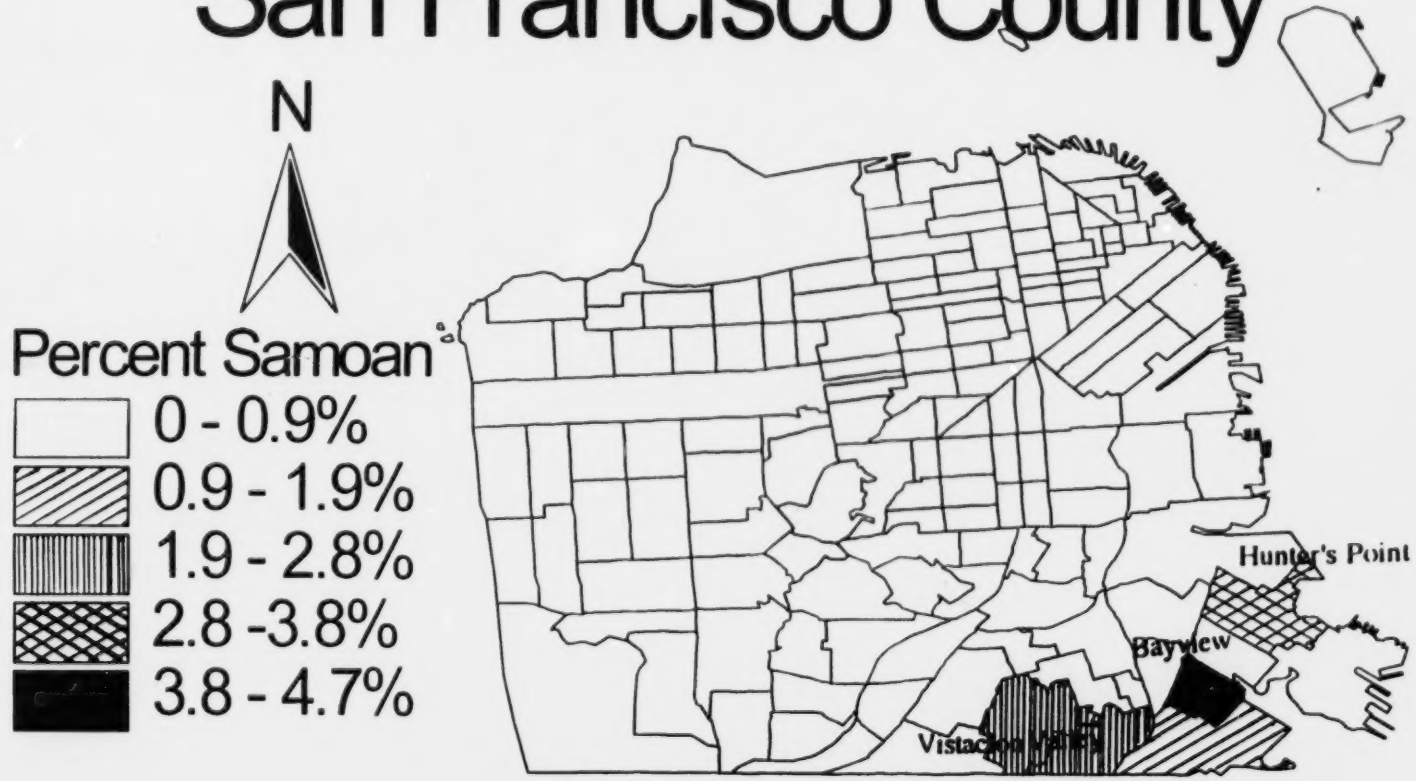
0.1 - 0.2%

0.2 - 0.4%


Los Angeles County
N
Percent Samoan
0 - 0.2%
0.2 - 0.8%
0.8 - 1.8%
1.8 - 4.1%
4.1 - 8.1%
Compton
Torrance
Long Beach
San Pedro
Carson

103

San Francisco County



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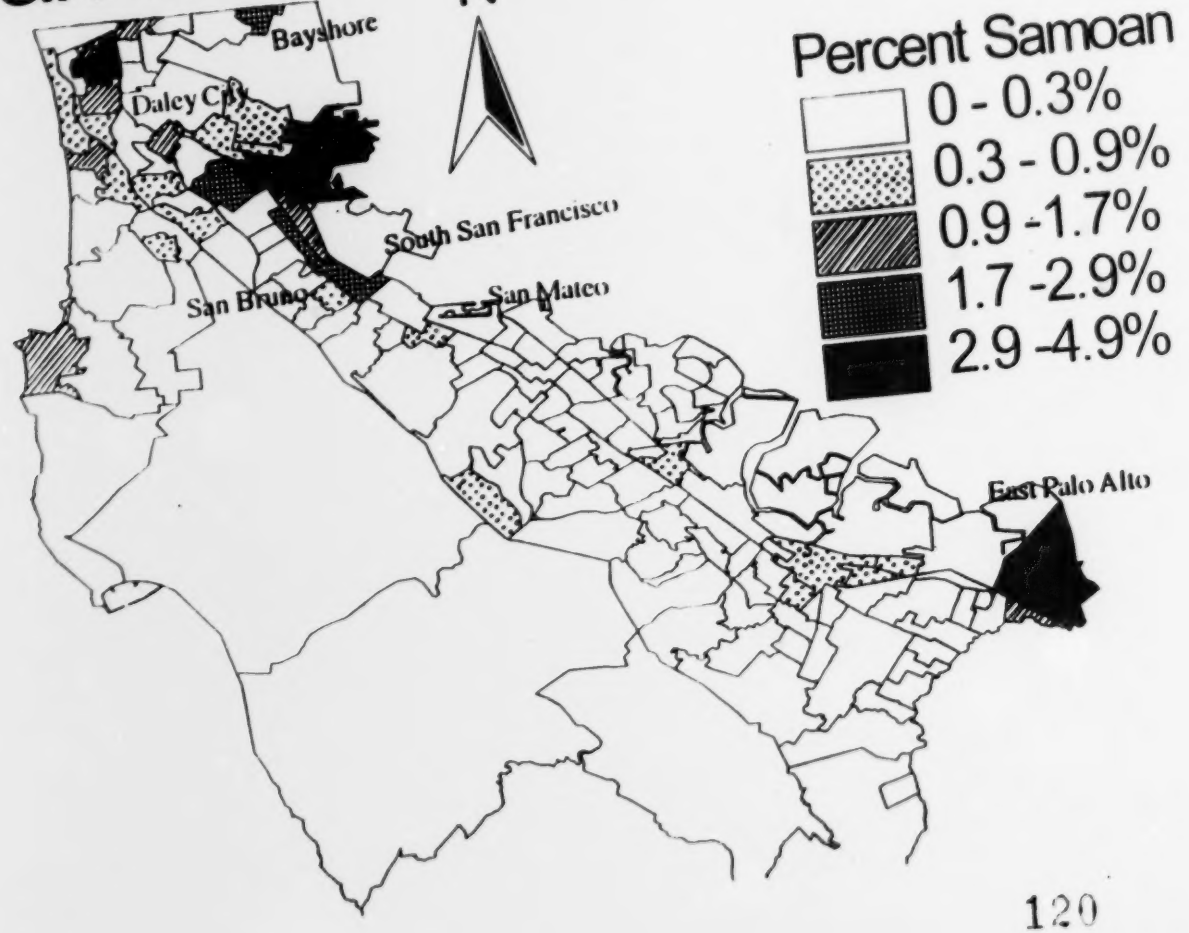
San Mateo County(North)



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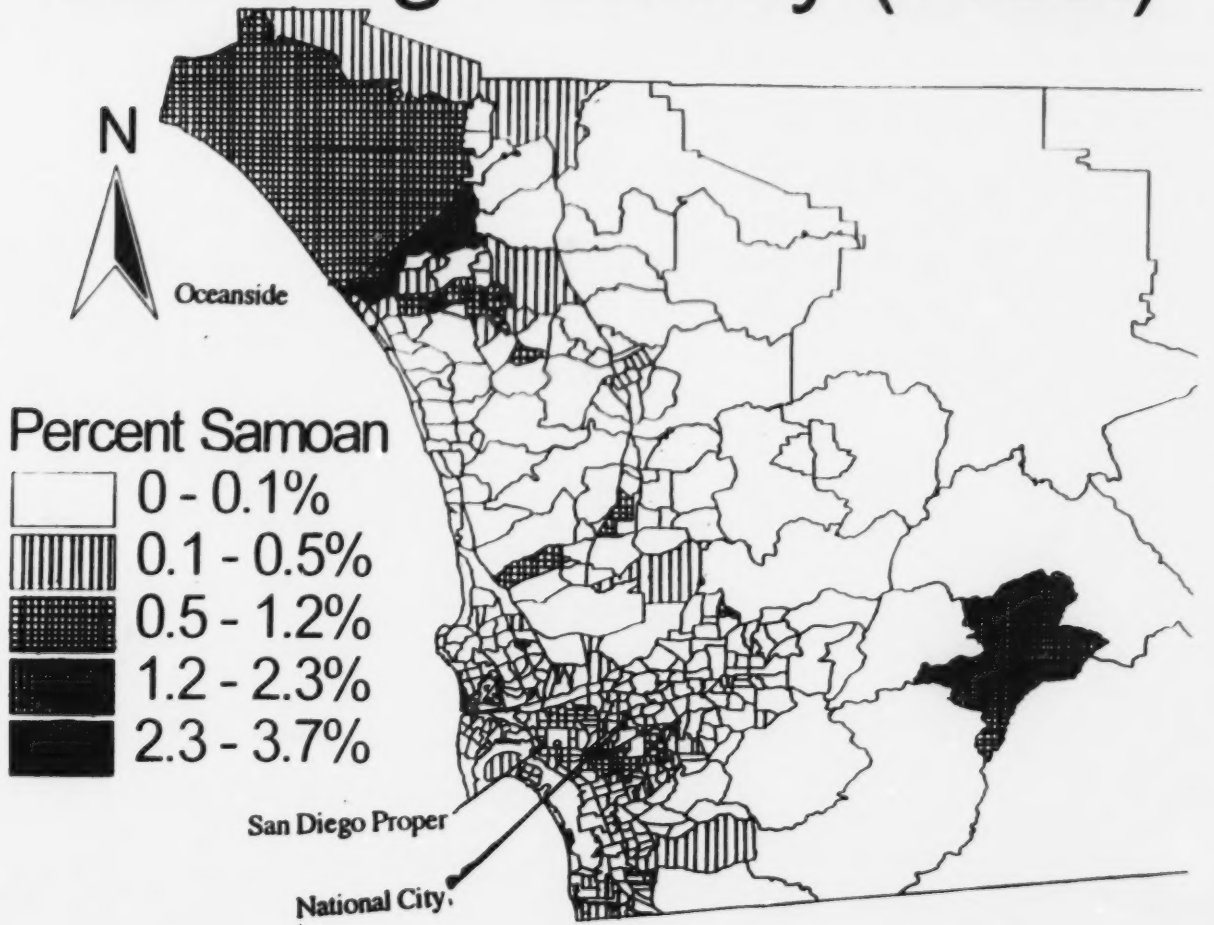
San Diego County (West)



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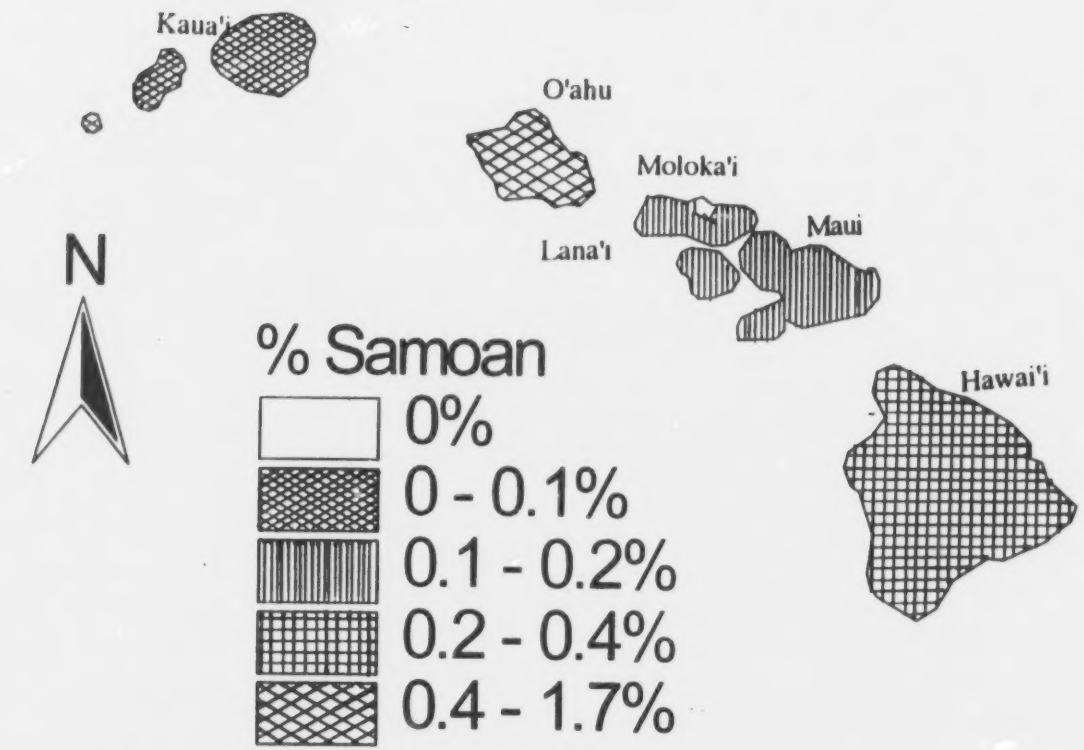
Hawaii Counties



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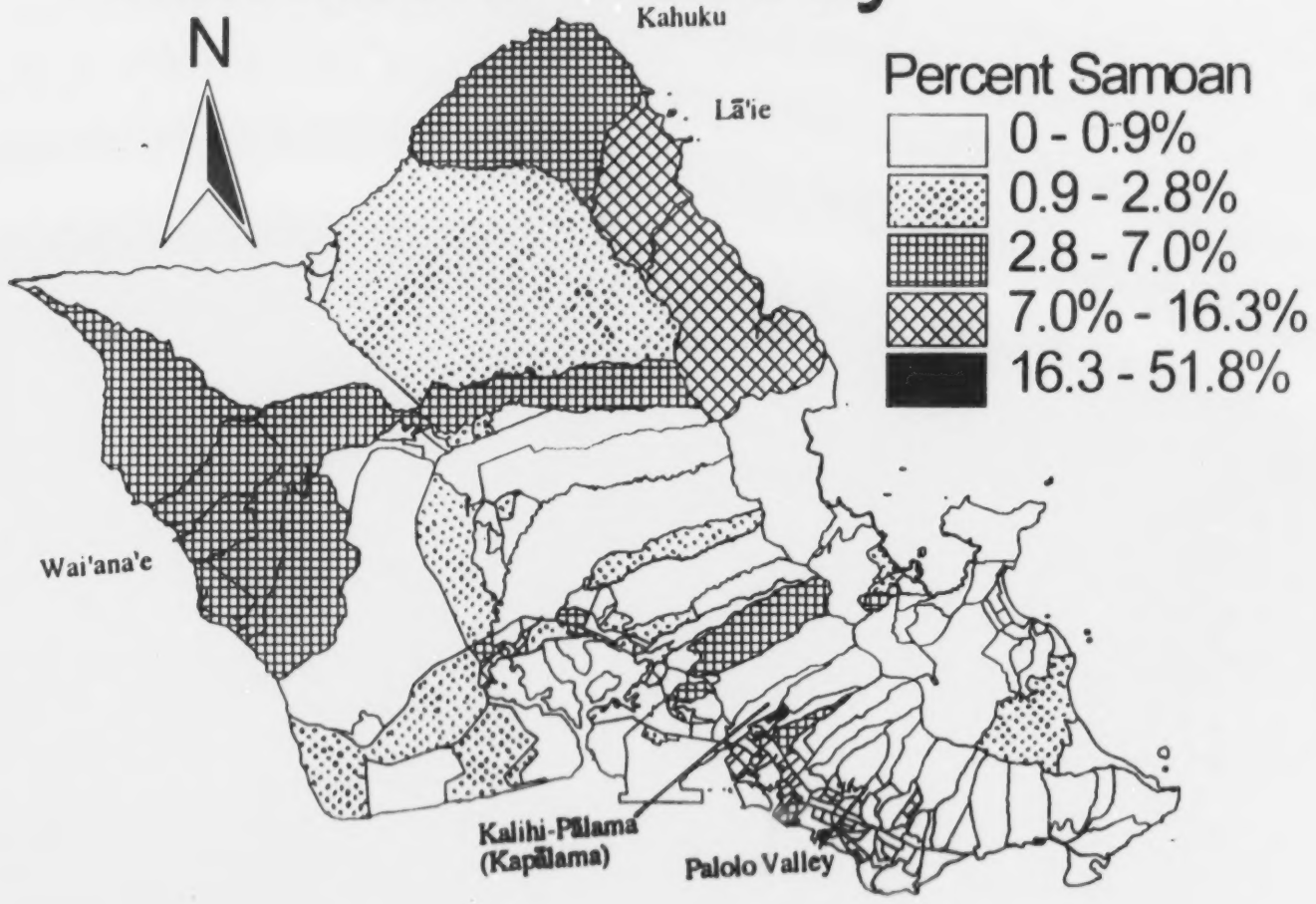
123

124

Honolulu County



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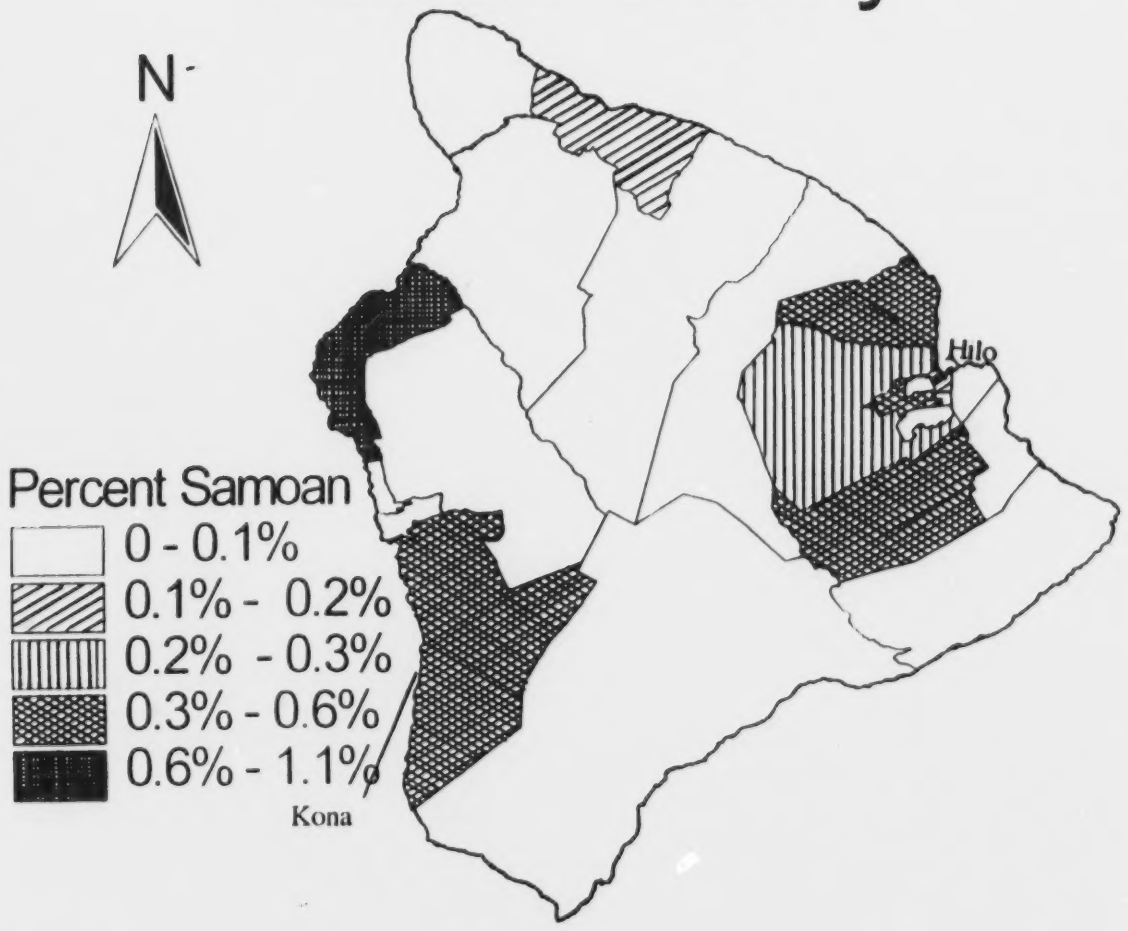
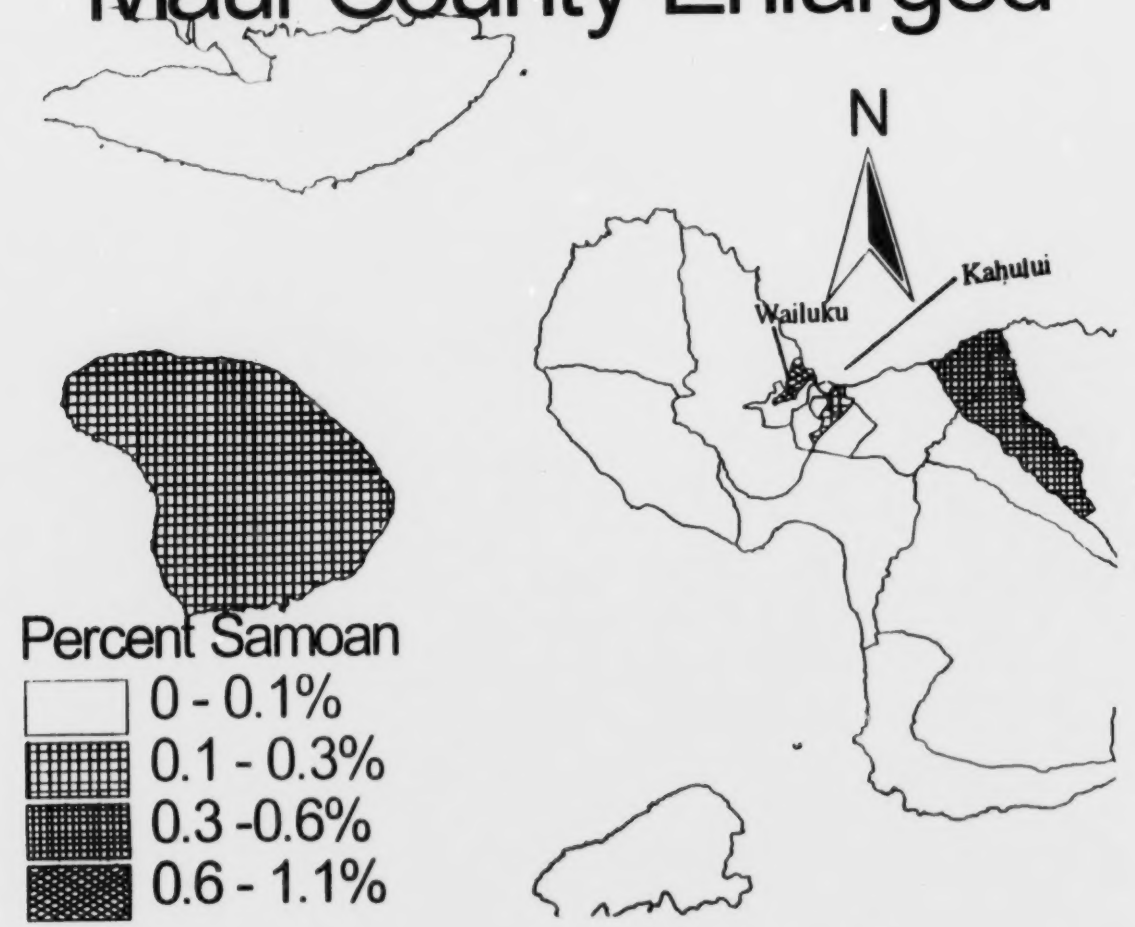
Hawai'i County



Maui County Enlarged



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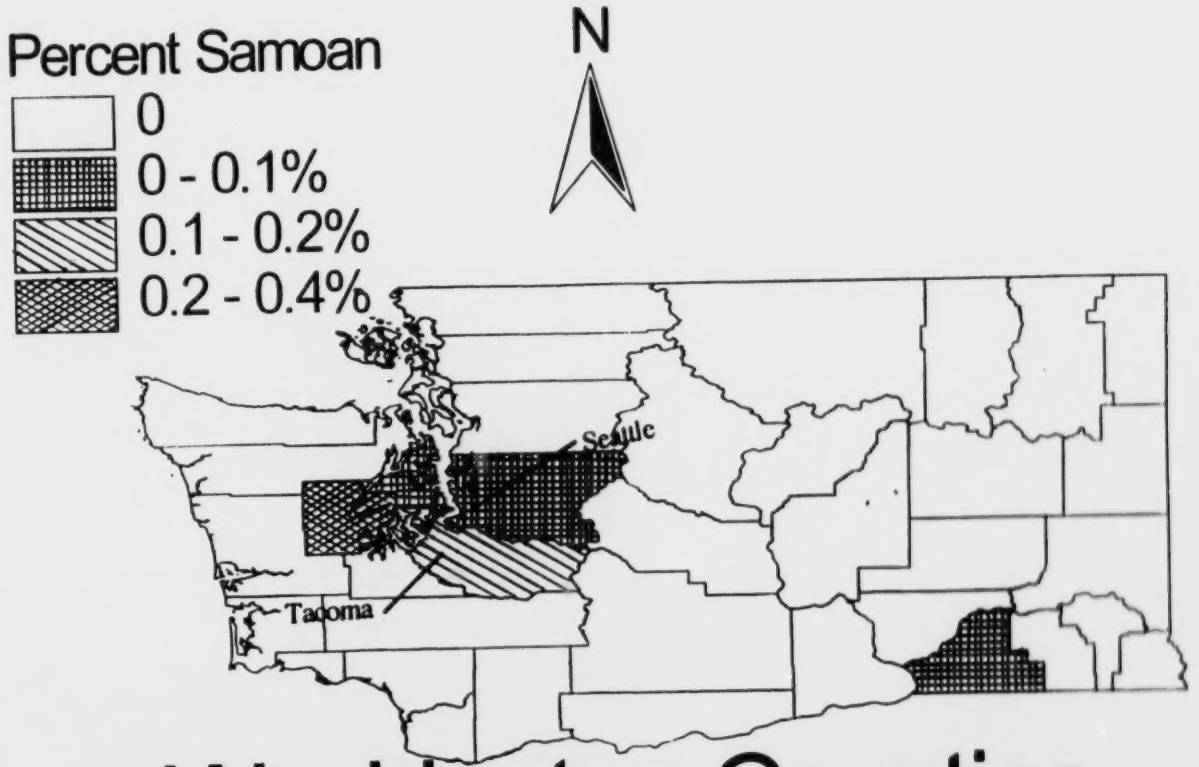
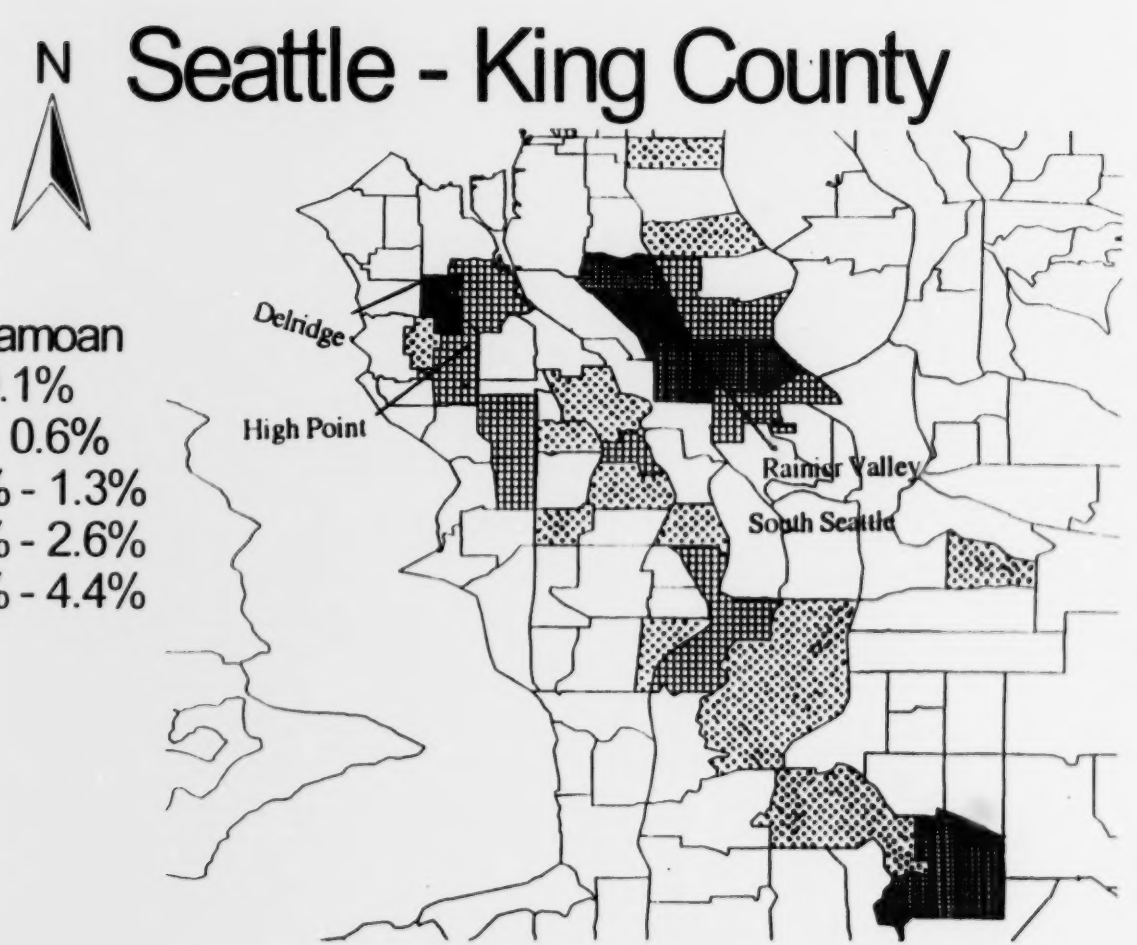
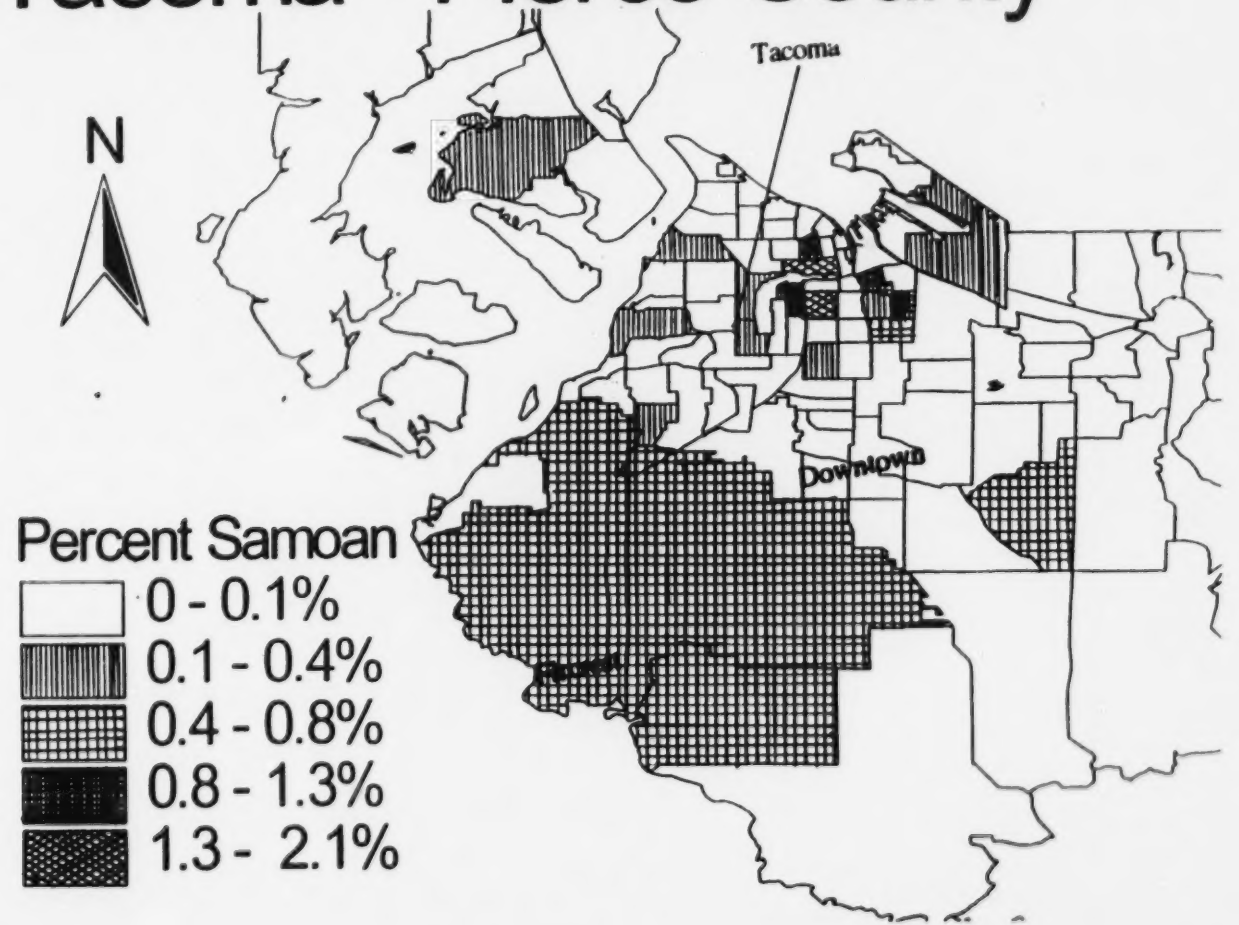


Washington Counties

Seattle - King County



Tacoma - Pierce County



APPENDIX G: 1996 Fall Ethnic Enrollment Data

Enrollment by Ethnicity Within California Institutions of Higher Education State-wide:

Institution:	Community College[1]		California StateUniversity[2]		University of California[3]	
Ethnicity:	Number	Percent[4]	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
African American:	88,372	06.3%	21,824	07.5%	6,539	03.9%
American Indian:	15,377	01.1%	3,520	01.2%	1,511	00.9%
Asian[5] :	160,893	11.5%	44,983	15.5%	47,201	28.3%
Chicana/o:	----------		----------		14,173	08.5%
Mexican American[6] :	141,779	10.2%	44,976	13.3%	----------	
Latina/o	----------		16,575	05.7%	6,299.....	03.7%
Hispanic	288,813	20.7%	----------		----------	
Filipino	42,860	03.1%	13,655	04.7%	5,919	03.5%
Pacific Islander	**6,849**	**0.5%**	**1,341**	**00.6%**	**575**	**00.3%**
White	609,590	43.7%	142,369	49.2%	71,756	43.0%
Total	1,396,400	100.0%	336,803	100.0%	166,718	100.0%

[1] http://www.cccco.edu

[2] http://www.calstate.edu

[3] http://www.ucop.edu

[4] Number and Percentage in respective institution

[5] Includes Asian Americans and Asian Nationals

[6] Includes Mexican and Mexican American

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